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Events of the Week.

THE Germans have resumed their infantry attacks on a large scale in the Amiens salient. The enemy bombardment on Tuesday embraced practically the whole of the British line. About the Ancre and Somme, the Scarpe Valley and on the southern and northern flanks of the Lys salient it reached a greater intensity. In the evening the outer defences of Kemmel were attacked, but the French troops there beat off the assault. On Wednesday morning the bombardment was especially directed against the southern flank of the Lys salient, and from Albert southwards. The infantry attacks, which began about 6.30, were directed against the sector between the Somme and the Avre. The first assaults seem to have been thrown back with loss. The fighting extended as far north as Albert; but it never reached a great intensity there, and was merely the flank guard of the main attack on the sector facing Amiens. Later in the day heavier attacks were delivered on the same sector. On Villers-Bretonnaux the German Staff threw the 4th Division Prussian Guards, and the German tanks were apparently first used in the action below the Somme. Villers-Bretonnaux fell into the enemy's hands, though fighting is continuing there.

* * *

A GLANCE at a map will show something of the importance of this village. It lies on the Amiens road; but up to Wednesday the troops had dammed this direct advance. Hangard, farther south, or its outskirts, seems to have been lost by the French, and this town, also, lies on the sector of the line which directly faces Amiens. But these small losses are of less importance in themselves than in the light they throw on the German plans. It is possible the Germans now intend to develop the Vimy-Arras sector into a pronounced salient. They may push forward by local, though forceful, attacks towards Amiens, and at the same time endeavor to weaken the southern flank of the Lys salient, in preparation for the smashing blow which shall capture Amiens and strike down in reverse of the Vimy salient, while a determined holding attack is being delivered frontally. This new bid for Amiens may be part of some such greater scheme.

In itself it matters little. The Germans do not want Villers-Bretonnaux or Hangard. What they are aiming at is the victory which will give them immediate peace. Such a victory comes in the end to depend upon relative exhaustion. The German Staff hope for a decision in the field in the immediate future. There is as yet no adequate sign of its approach.

* * *

THE Naval raids on Zeebrugge and Ostend carry us back to the most glorious and also the best traditions of the Navy. Since the departure of Lord Fisher it has been assumed that, short of engaging any German craft which might be discovered at large, the offensive rôle of the Navy had passed. The brilliant little episode of Tuesday morning proves that this was, and is, untrue. Six obsolete cruisers, and two ferry-boats plying some three months ago on the Mersey, formed the chief units of the attack, which was assisted by a force of monitors, motor-launches, and coastal motor-boats. And the whole operation was covered from the North by light forces under Admiral Tyrwhitt, the raids being under the command of Vice-Admiral Roger Keyes. The plan was to block the entrance to the harbors of Zeebrugge and Ostend, a project which involved hazards of the most extraordinary kind. Even in daylight, and without the fear of shorefire, to navigate such waters to-day without striking a mine or running aground can be no easy feat. At night-time the difficulties may be dimly appreciated by anyone who has entered a British port at night. Imagine all lights out and no signals of any sort. Add to this the comparative novelty of these ports after three years of German labor on them, and we may form some idea of the Navy's exploit.

* * *

EVERYTHING seems to show the care and skill of the operation. There were feint landings on the Mole at Zeebrugge and apparently also at Ostend. A carefully-devised fog-screen was interposed between the shore batteries and the operating vessels. The attack began early in the morning, and under cover of it the "Vindictive," one of the obsolete cruisers, and the ferry-boats, "Iris" and "Daffodil," ran in to the sea side of the Zeebrugge Mole, which makes a sort of quadrant covering the harbor. The "Vindictive" had specially built-out prows from which (and from the ferry-boats) men were landed. They advanced up the Mole, fighting their way, while others destroyed the battery, destroyer, and submarine depôts and seaplane base upon it. The men were volunteers from the Navy and Royal Marines, chosen from a much greater number, and they fought with the utmost gallantry and skill, holding their positions alongside the Mole for over an hour. We do not know how far they succeeded in destroying the works; but they inflicted and unfortunately suffered heavy loss, and the survivors were able to re-embark on their parent vessels and leave.

* * *

MEANWHILE the main purpose, the blocking of the entrance to the harbors, was being carried out. At Zeebrugge the operation seems to have been quite successful. Two of the three cruisers were sunk and blown up, full of concrete, at the entrance to the canal, while

the third went aground on the way in. Two old submarines filled with explosives were to be blown up at the pile-work connecting the masonry of the Mole with the shore, and one of these was got into position and so treated. As a result a twenty-five yards' section was blown out of the viaduct. At Ostend the success was apparently not so pronounced. But aircraft have observed that the greater part of the fairway is blocked, and the navigation of the port will not be easy for some time. The German fire, where it got home, must have been very terrible, and men who were at the Dardanelles say that the experience off the Belgian coast was worse. Three German destroyers are reported to have been destroyed. One British destroyer was sunk off the Mole by gunfire, and two coastal motor-boats and two motor-launches are missing. The whole episode, with its Nelson touch, reflects the highest credit upon the Navy, and we trust that in the coming months the Government (or its successor) will remember that the Army is not our only arm. The marines left the Union Jack at the end of the Mole, and the survivors seem well-pleased with themselves, despite an experience that, for roughness and even terror, has few parallels in war.

MR. GEORGE has united Ireland against his Government—Nationalist Ireland against Conscription, Ulster against Home Rule. His policy is without a friend; and, like him, is doomed, for even he cannot add an Irish war (with Lord Milner as its Strafford) to the gigantic struggle on the Continent. The one-day strike against conscription was a perfect success of organization, and over a million pledges were taken. The resistance—which is apparently designed as a passive movement, not a rising in arms—is made up of three great strands, reunited Nationalism, the Catholic Church, and Labor, the last greatly increased in strength. Even in Protestant Ulster it is calculated that at least 50 per cent. of the people oppose conscription. Here the confusion is complete. Sir Edward Carson has written a bitter letter, practically calling Orange Ulster to arms against Home Rule, a threatened renewal of his rebellion of 1914. Hardly a newspaper or a public man supports Mr. George, and Mr. Asquith has only to speak twenty words and his Government comes to an end. It is announced that both Lord Wimborne and Mr. Duke are on the eve of resignation, and it is clear that only a Ministry of conciliation and common-sense can restore our jeopardized cause.

WE must reserve detailed treatment of the scheme of Lord Bryce's Committee for the reform of the House of Lords. It follows on the lines of a proposal made in THE NATION in 1914, and, if we may be allowed modestly to say so, does not improve it. We proposed a consultative Senate of 120 members (100 selected by the House of Commons and 20 nominated), representing, on a proportional scheme, the division of parties in the representative Chamber. This limited Senate, like that of Lord Bryce, would act through a Conference in its dealings with the Commons, when Bills were in dispute between the two Houses. But it could not have touched finance, and it would have no absolute powers of amendment, still less of rejection. In other words, the power of the Parliament Act would have been left intact. The Senate would be an advisory body of experts.

LORD BRYCE's Committee contemplates a larger and more ambitious organ of government, with a mixed origin. Its members would approach 400, which seems to us much too large. The derivative principle is preserved as to two-thirds of the body, which will be elected (for twelve years, one-third retiring every four years) by the House of Commons, sitting in small geographical colleges. The other third will be chosen by a Joint Committee of the two Houses, so that the principle of co-optation is linked to that of derivation. An *ex-officio* membership of law officers and scions of Royalty is also added, and a quota of hereditary peers will always be present. The medium of adjusting differences between the two Houses will be a Free Conference. Purely financial Bills are not

to be rejected or amended by the new Upper Chamber, but other Bills, if so treated by it, come under the Conference, and its emendations, in the last resort, must either be accepted by the House of Commons, or the Bill as a whole rejected by them. The Commons will not have the power of restoring its Bill to its original form. This is a curtailment of powers which the democracy will never accept.

MR. BONAR LAW's Budget is sensational in size, but not in substance. The estimated expenditure of £2,972,197,000 exceeds the aggregate pre-war income of the entire nation by some 600 millions. Of this sum 842 millions is to be raised by tax and other revenue; the rest, 2,130 millions, by loan. If these estimates are fulfilled, the increased revenue of 135 millions just suffices to take care of the increased borrowing. But every war estimate of expenditure has been greatly exceeded, and, as the same causes of excess still operate, the same result may be expected. It is true that revenue estimates are also exceeded, but by much smaller amounts. The net addition to our debt this year is, therefore, likely to exceed 2,000 millions by several hundred millions. This huge borrowing means more inflation, higher prices, more profiteering for the fortunate few, more misery for the many. Assuming the war to end this year, Mr. Law estimated that this year's taxation (excluding the excess profits tax) would yield 650 millions, just enough to balance his estimate of the expenditure. But neither side of this account will bear investigation. The first years of peace expenditure must greatly exceed his figure, and with the shrinkage of war-expenditure the ordinary tax yield will fall.

THE revenue proposals were well received, not because they were adequate (the House does not stand for financial adequacy), but because they were lenient and of specious variety. More drastic assaults on income had been carefully put about in the Press in order to produce this sense of relief. The standard income tax was raised to 6s., instead of 6s. 8d. as confidently predicted, the super-tax limit placed at £2,500 instead of at a lower figure, with a maximum rate raised only by 1s. Farmers get off easily with an assessment upon twice their rent. But most flagitious is the abstention from any increase of Death Duties. The great bulk of the increased revenue is to be taken by indirect taxation, 4d. more on letters and postcards, a penny on cheques, heavier duties on drink, tobacco, matches, sugar. Thoroughly vicious are the increases upon sugar and postal correspondence: the rest are tolerable. The only novelty is a stamp upon the purchases of scheduled luxuries, a French invention. The debate was perfunctory, the only striking contribution being Mr. Sydney Arnold's powerful argument of the case for a capital levy, by means of which, he contended, three-fourths of the burden of the debt should be redeemed in the opening years of peace. His argument we present elsewhere in our columns.

A SPEECH by Herr Helfferich, whom rumor names as a likely successor to Herr von Kühlmann, if he should go the way of Count Czernin, is the most interesting thing which has been said in Germany since the offensive began. He says, as he well may, that the threats to take Alsace and the left bank of the Rhine have no terrors for Germans. What does alarm them, however, is the British scheme to "throttle their economic system." Our success in "cutting all the threads which unite Germany to foreign countries" he does not dispute. "If England has her way . . . we shall be roped in and bottled up on the Continent," and "the German people will emerge from the war with a broken spine." The remedy is, according to Herr Helfferich, simply "victory." It is interesting to note that for him the Eastern successes are evidently no compensation whatever for these economic losses and dangers. There are two ways of reading such a speech. One may take it literally and dismiss it, as the "Times" does, as a "tirade." For our part we argue that a man who admits so frankly that we hold trump cards would be prepared to bargain with us. No "victory" in Flanders, as he very well knows, will touch

our economic power to "bottle up" Germany. The question is whether we choose to secure a good peace for the world by bartering our economic advantages, or whether our Protectionists and their extremists will drive us into a scheme for destroying German trade.

THERE is no doubt that the more unstable elements of the Reichstag Majority are preparing to repudiate the July Resolution. What they wish to secure is apparently less annexations than indemnities, and their reasoning is that since we rejected their overture of last summer, it would be fair to place on us the costs of the war from that date onwards. It is, however, only part of the Centre and some of the Radicals who reason in this way. The Majority Socialists, though they have been converted to the view that victory is necessary and have therefore acquiesced in the offensive, are not prepared to alter their political programme, and they are numerically too strong for the rest of the Majority to ignore them. The sincerer Radicals are also making a fight. Their leader, Herr Haussmann, points out that the problem is still to convert military successes into political successes. He predicts that the Reichstag will stick to its resolution, and declines to treat the waverers seriously. The resolution "was, and is, an expression of the will to reason and the idea that peace must contemplate the future, and therefore must not be guided by compulsion and hatred." Clearly the forces of moderation are still in being, and may be able to assert themselves, if and when the hopes based on the offensive prove delusive. On the other hand, it is said that Erzberger is to be prosecuted for his dealings with the Austrian peace party.

THE appointment of Baron Burian to succeed Count Czernin means that Austria has bowed herself for the moment under the German yoke. He is Tisza's man, and stands for the German-Magyar ascendancy. The submission, however, may be only tactical and momentary. It is significant that Baron Burian retains his post as Joint Finance Minister. He can hardly hold both for long, and this may mean that he is only a stop-gap Foreign Minister. Again, in a cordial letter to Count Czernin, the Emperor expressed the hope that he would not lose the Count's services. The reasons which make Austria pacifist are imperious, and must bring her policy back to the former lines, whoever is in power. There is a completely successful coal strike, which has led to a suspension of all trains on the Northern Railway. The Lord Mayor of Vienna roundly states that the capital is starving. No German victories will alter this situation.

SIR DOUGLAS HAIG has issued a short interim report on the first month's fighting of the deciding battle. The number of divisions used against the British alone is 102, and many have been withdrawn, had their losses repaired, and have reappeared. What these losses are we may gather from the description of the loss of two-thirds of the company leaders as "quite normal." But the more moving part of Sir Douglas Haig's report is its witness to the courage and resolution of all ranks. It was the 4th Division, it appears, which assisted to break up the attack launched on March 28th against Vimy Ridge, and the same Division on the night of April 14th-15th retook the village of Reiz du Vinage on the southern flank of the Lys Battle. It was the 21st Division which stood firm at Epéhy during the opening days of the attack, when the waves of Germans were well on its right rear; and the German reports bore witness to the mettle of these troops. The nation may draw a deep draught of encouragement from the heroic stand of the 31st Division, east of Nieppe Forest, on April 13th.

THIS Division was ordered to stand to the last to cover the detrainment of reinforcements. At the end of the day after incessant attacks the Germans overran some parts of the line, over the dead bodies of the defenders. But their resistance had won sufficient time to allow the reinforcements to arrive, and the Germans were thrown back. We can gather from this little

episode that a certain pressure of troops must prevail; but no one can reasonably expect that any army can afford to apply such pressure very long. And, further, we are justified in the inference that such resistance as that of our men in France, in spite of all, will be able at the very least to cover the arrival of reinforcements. It is interesting to know that it was the 34th Division which made so stout a fight against von Below at Croisilles. Its subsequent appearance at Armentières won tribute from the German Staff. It was almost surrounded when the order to evacuate Armentières was given, and a part was cut off and fought against overwhelming odds in the ruined city. Such deeds as these are our best insurance against a German victory, and they are not peculiar to certain parts of the Army. They are typical of the whole.

THE Dutch Press shows signs of alarm at the pressure which German diplomacy is bringing to bear. The immediate issue is the sand and gravel question, and the German claim to use the Dutch canals to transport these materials to Belgium. The chief means used to coerce Holland is apparently a threat to cut off her supplies of coal and iron. Germany is, however, looking to the future, and wants to extract from Holland now a pledge to supply her with rubber from Java after the war, and to lend her a part of the Dutch merchant fleet. The rumors of an ultimatum are denied, and it is hard to believe that Germany meditates an invasion of Holland, for such an adventure would add nothing to the facilities she already enjoys in Belgium. The "Frankfurter Zeitung" states, however, that Admiral Jellicoe was dismissed because he refused to undertake a British landing in Holland. This is, presumably, a wilfully untruthful version of the controversy over the possibility of attacking Zeebrugge. But it is when the German General Staff is meditating some villainy of its own that it usually tries to make a pretext by inventing some charge against us. It did this, for example, when it was about to use poison gas. It declared that the French had already used it and we proposed to employ it. Neither statement was true. But it served to cover the German recourse to this horrible weapon.

THE American papers now arriving report debates in the Senate, opening on March 26th, on the results of one full year's military preparation. The chief attention was directed to the failure to supply aeroplanes. Major-General Leonard Wood and Colonel Lester Jones, of the Supply Department, were examined by the Military Affairs Committee. Allowance must be made for partisan statements and for later improvements. But there was evidence to show not a single 'plane had reached France; one training 'plane had been shipped; thirty-seven 'planes would be ready by July, instead of the 12,000 promised. The American sector in France had no air defences, and men, as General Wood himself stated, were reduced to defending themselves with revolvers against the low-flying German 'planes. Violent attacks were made on the propaganda department, on the ground that they had issued untruthful reports of the work done. The statement made by Mr. Secretary Baker that fifty "American" machines were "up" in a certain camp in France when he arrived, and 100 before he left, have now been authoritatively explained. The machines were built in France and England out of American material. The failure to manufacture 'planes in America on any large scale is not disputed by the Administration.

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Politics and Affairs.

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MR. ASQUITH.

THE country has now before it the immediate results of Mr. George's conduct of Irish affairs. In a single fortnight he has made a united Ireland—against himself. He has knit into a single fabric a Nationalism which includes the Catholic Church, the Parliamentary Party, the Independents, the Sinn Féiners, and the Labor organizations, pledged by a solemn oath and covenant to resist one part of his policy, the rest of Ireland being already bound by a similar covenant to resist the other. Apply this unique strategy to the war and the diplomacy of the war. Mr. George deducts from our fighting force enough British soldiers, it may be, to decide the pending battles in our favor, while he shuts out all hope of an Irish recruitment. He tears to fragments the conciliatory work of two generations of Liberalism, and puts in grave jeopardy the American Alliance and the cause for which we went to war. This is his offence. No British Minister ever committed a greater one. The Liberal leader, whose policy he has brought to naught, has, in grave error, consented to pass it over. But time can only aggravate it, and may at any moment bring it to overwhelming and irremediable disaster. Parliament will next week go through the mockery of discussing a Home Rule Bill in sittings which Nationalist Ireland will not even deign to attend. Why should she? The Bill was not brought in to redeem any hope or aspiration of hers. It was introduced, on Mr. George's confession, because a naked act of Irish conscription, without a pretence of consulting a single Irishman, would not have looked nice in the eyes of America or of British Labor. A killing frost therefore has already fallen on the fruit of the Home Rule enthusiasm of Mr. Walter Long and Mr. Austen Chamberlain. If the Home Rule Bill be a trick, it is exposed. If it be a policy, its author has strangled it at birth. Ireland and England might have settled their quarrel in 1886, in 1906, and in 1914. Both were then in the mood and the atmosphere of reconciliation; and, in fact, a long truce was established between them. But Ireland did not get Home Rule, and she kept on losing her manhood. Now, having presented Ulster with the key which locks her out of Home Rule,* Mr. George prepares his forced draft on her dwindling population. She has treated it as an act of war which, as no man can make a nation fight against its will, she has won without firing a shot. Mr. George having betrayed both Irish parties in turn, is left without a friend in either camp, has got the shadow of his Bill and lost the substance, and has dealt his country a worse blow than the Germans struck at St. Quentin.

This is the measure of Mr. George's statesmanship. That he is a public danger, as his Government is a public scandal, and that for the sake of England and Ireland, of the war and the peace, he should be got rid of at the earliest moment, is the prevailing sentiment, uttered or unexpressed, among men of good sense and good feeling, who love their country and her cause, and see them in imminent risk of perdition at his hands. We have recited his major offence. But his whole system of government is an offence. What of his administration? Its extravagance no pen can describe. His own career as a Minister of Munitions was a carnival of financial disorder and profligate expense. A year ago this Department had got rid of over 500 millions, in itself a great National Debt; by what methods,

and with what regard for our staying-power in a great war, readers of the Controller and Auditor-General's report can bear witness.† And if economy is one test of a good Government, stability in its ordering and *personnel* is another. But with Mr. George the waters are always troubled. The mediocrities who compose his Ministry shuffle from post to post, from hour to hour. But there is always room for newcomers. Let a dog bark and a bone is thrown him; a sturdy mendicant threaten and the larder is at his disposal. But honest service does not fare so well. Three men of high character, ripe in experience and unsurpassed at their work, have given the Empire of their best. Jellicoe was the pick of our fighting sailors; Robertson our foremost thinking soldier. Trenchard made the arm that has been the one unequivocal success of the war, and lent it its peculiar quality of chivalrous and brilliant initiative. All are gone, and their places given to inferior men. Now a case arises here for firm but circumspect treatment. The right of the political to dismiss his technical adviser cannot be disputed. It lies at the root of our governing system, and is indispensable to efficiency. But if this right exists, it is subject to a sense of responsibility in the choice of Cabinet Ministers and directors of great departments. The indictment of Mr. George is that he has introduced into politics a class of men who, while they are the foundation of his power, are unfit to govern England. Lord Rothermere is known as the director of a low type of journalism, and is known for nothing else in the world. He has now resigned his office, but the results of his brief administration remain. It is possible to argue that he had a good case for getting rid of Sir Hugh Trenchard and Sir David Henderson. But considering what the work of these men has been, the importance of the Air Service, and the alarm and discouragement that prevail in it at a most critical hour, the matter is one for close inquiry. Hitherto Parliament has gone the wrong way to work. If the truth is wanted, the method of question and answer across the floor of the House will never disclose it. Ministers do not answer straightforwardly, as a long experience of them entitles their critics to say. Even if their candor shone out like the sun, it would shrink from revealing the more intimate exchanges between Lord Rothermere and General Trenchard. If Parliament wants power it must take it, and use its historic weapon instead of flirting with it. That weapon, employed with powerful effect in the capital example of the Crimean war, is the Committee of Inquiry. Parliament is a sovereign assembly, and the delegate of its powers cannot be denied. It can summon Lord Rothermere. It can confront him with Sir Hugh Trenchard. It can discover the mind of the director of the "Daily Mirror," as applied to the problem of mastering the Germans in the air and its point of conflict with the rather different genius of Sir Hugh Trenchard and Sir David Henderson. Now there is one man to whom a demand for inquiry as to the management of the war in the air or on the land or on the sea cannot be refused. That man is Mr. Asquith. He has the right to defend the war services, for whether his conduct of them be deemed good or bad, he managed them in a spirit of sympathy for their chiefs. In our view Mr. Asquith cannot decline this service; and if he does he runs a measurable risk of losing all power of helping his country at her need. He might have stopped Irish conscription and saved England and Ireland a shocking and possibly a

† Take the Auditor-General's account of the expenditure on national factories. The cost of five filling factories estimated at £1,696,000 had by March 31st, 1917, already grown to £5,675,000, and has since expanded.

* The pledge against coercion.

fatal conflict. He held his hand. It was a grave error, for the country waited for a lead, as it has waited before. It is not too late for Mr. Asquith to intervene in the grave case of Ireland. It can never be too late for him to protect the war services from unreasonable and unsettling treatment.

In our view, the time has come for the House of Commons to exert control over the whole theatre of the war. It is not possible to deny an investigation into the cause of the breach which the Germans made in our line in the area of St. Quentin. That event has changed the entire course of the war. It followed on a re-adjustment and extension of the British line, for which the Prime Minister, and not, as Mr. Law endeavored meanly to suggest, the military, is finally responsible. The defence of the Western Front is the joint concern of England and France, and the apportionment of the shares of the two nations is a matter of political settlement. The transference of the St. Quentin area from the French to the British Armies could not have taken place without Mr. George's consent. We knew that the British troops moving into it were greatly outnumbered, and that the means of defence were inadequate. For that defeat on the British Front, and all it involved, Mr. George must be called to account. It is not a matter to be lightly bruited abroad, or shaken from the flying wings of popular or journalistic rumor. But it is a question for unsparing investigation by the supreme authority in this realm. Mr. George can deny that right to a private member; he cannot deny it to Mr. Asquith. There are at this moment four men on whose wisdom and courage the restoration of the threatened power of this Empire largely depends. They are Mr. Asquith, Lord Grey, Lord Lansdowne, and Mr. Henderson. These statesmen represent the forces from which, in the main, the work of rescue must come, and to refuse that national service, or even delay it for an unnecessary hour, could be an act of recusancy and defeat. They should be ready to take office to-morrow, for only when they have come to that resolve can they act with freedom and with power.

ANOTHER YEAR OF BAD FINANCE.

THE generally favorable reception accorded to Mr. Bonar Law's fiscal statement by the House of Commons is but a flimsy testimony to its adequacy. For every method of financial evasiveness employed from the opening of the war has met the approval of a House which has cheerfully renounced its primary function as guardian of the public purse. During four years the House has never lifted its voice to enforce economy in expenditure or to insist upon meeting current expenditure mainly out of current revenue. The debauchery of borrowing, in which ever higher prices are paid for loan money furnished for a large part out of swollen war profits and for the rest out of bank inflation, is to continue, and on a larger scale than ever. For out of the estimated expenditure for this year, close upon 3,000 millions, 842 millions is to be furnished from revenue, leaving much more than 2,000 millions for fresh borrowing. And, if experience teaches anything, the actual figures of expenditure will far exceed the estimate. Last year the shortage was upwards of 400 millions. Is it likely to be less this year? In face of the recent revelations of the House of Commons Committee and of the inquiry into the Munitions Department nobody can pretend that any effective steps have been taken to stop the profligate extravagance by which public money has poured out through the sieves of the war-spending departments into the pockets of innumerable manufacturers, middlemen, and traders, not to mention the ever-growing sums

allocated to the privy purses of countless new bodies of officials.

Moreover, a great deal of this rise of expenditure is automatic. Each year a new debt charge of some 120 millions comes into being. Each year the constant rise of prices and of wages enhances the cost of Governmental goods and services. Each year sees an increase in the number of persons put upon the military pay list, the quantities of munitions and other supplies needed to maintain this large number, and the number of dependents and pensioners. Mr. Law appears to have entirely left out of account this inevitable increase, or else to have cancelled it by assuming other purely hypothetical savings, as, for example, the great reduction in the estimates of our advances to the Allies. Mr. Law congratulates the country upon paying 28.3 per cent. of this year's total expenditure out of taxation, as compared with 26.3 per cent. last year. But we feel tolerably sure that events will falsify his congratulation. In any case it is perilous finance to provide out of taxation a sum which is a good deal less than 25 per cent. of the purely war expenditure. The increased yield of taxes for this year, imposing as it sounds, will probably fail to cover the interest and sinking fund in the year's borrowing.

Taking the most favorable view, this Budget does nothing to lighten the intolerable burden of indebtedness which it is admitted must by the close of this year amount to about 8,000 millions. The fact that Germany's finance has been more reckless still, and that her plight will be more desperate than ours, is cold comfort to the business and propertied classes here who will be called upon to find the means of discharging this debt. Mr. Law tries to make this post-war prospect tolerable by figuring out an estimated Peace expenditure at 650 millions. He does it, however, by writing down the assets too high and the debts too low. There is no ground for his assumption that half our loans to foreign States will materialize in cash at any calculable date, or that the business classes will furnish him 1,200 millions in purchase-money for Government properties and for arrears of taxes, or that existing taxes will yield as much when war expenditure is over as during its operation. His notion that the first Peace Budget can be got down to 650 millions appears to us quite chimerical. His sum for the debt charge, 380 millions, is far too low to furnish interest and sinking fund at 1 per cent. for an aggregate which will go on gathering volume throughout the long period of demobilization, and which cannot safely be put down at less than 8,000 millions, even were it permissible to write off half the advances to Allies. This year's taxation, the vicious character of which will be far more keenly felt in peace time, will, in our judgment, fall short by at least 100 millions of providing the required peace revenue, taking the lowest computation for Governmental committals on housing, education, and other necessary social projects.

Eight hundred and forty millions no doubt seems and is a large revenue. It is incredibly large until we recollect that the enormous rise of prices only makes it represent half that amount in actual purchasing power. Before the war our expenditure was 200 millions. If money had kept the same value, the taxation and other public income for this year would only have been 420 millions, a little more than twice the pre-war level. Would that have seemed so heroic an effort for a patriotic nation? No. It can never be repeated too often that a really rigorous taxation, begun in 1914 and carried on till now, would have left us in a far sounder condition both for conducting the war and for facing the peace finance. The money and the goods are there. We get them. But we get them by crooked and expensive methods of borrowing which inflate prices, oppress the poorer purchasers, put huge war loot into the pockets of contractors and financiers, and fail to restrain expenditure in luxuries.

As for this patchwork of new taxation, it contains one major and many minor vices. The major vice is its preference for indirect taxation. Why is no more than 23½ millions out of 135 to be taken out of increased income taxes? It was expected that the maximum rate would have been raised at least to 6s. 8d. in the £, that

super-tax would have begun at £1,500, and that a far steeper rise would have been taken for the upper reaches. Did not the national exchequer need the money, or did Mr. Bonar Law's heart fail him? The nation was braced up for such a sacrifice. Why was it foregone? Not less flagitious is the failure to put even a penny more on Death Duties. All economists recognize that far greater sums can be got from this source without any interference with the springs of production or of saving. Why this tender regard for accumulated property? Or can it be that Mr. Bonar Law postpones immediate action, in order not to reduce the size of the body upon which he reckons that a capital levy may be raised? He made, indeed, no response to Mr. Sydney Arnold's powerfully urged demand. Does this silence mean assent?

The indirect taxation comprises several follies and one novelty. It is a really wicked thing to put another 12½ millions upon sugar, a necessary food, whose greatly enhanced price and short supply have already subjected the poorer classes to serious privation. Matches are dangerous toys for Chancellors, and to aggravate existing scarcity for so trivial a yield as £600,000 is merely asking for trouble. The abolition of the penny post, one of the most valued democratic institutions, can hardly be a wise step to take at a time when the severance of so many million men from their friends has given intense urgency to letter-writing. We feel sure that this proposal will be successfully resisted, perhaps even in Parliament, if not, by the general substitution of post-cards for letters.

The single novelty is the luxury tax, borrowed from France. We regard it as a clumsy, expensive, and ineffective way of securing an economy which should have been enforced by a more drastic taxation of incomes. It will involve a horde of new officials, extraordinary difficulty in scheduling and in enforcement, and, if French experience tells for aught, will not curb but actually promote extravagant expenditure. Reckless buyers with means at their disposal will pay more for what they want, and will have smaller margins for investment in war loans. The proper way to deal with luxuries is to stop their production at the source by removing through direct taxation all superfluous incomes. Specific taxation of luxuries is a mere confession of lack of principle in war finance. If our soldiers were as incompetent and as cowardly as our politicians and financiers, we might well despair of the Republic. Happily that is a different story.

THE CAPITAL LEVY AS A BUSINESS PROPOSITION.

WHEN the proposal of a Capital Levy, as a means of reducing the burden of the War Debt was first put forward, it was generally regarded by business men and serious politicians as a wild-cat scheme. Since then many solid adherents have come in, and the guarded personal approval of Mr. Bonar Law at once placed it on the plane of political politics. There has been also a powerful and very vocal opposition in the Press and on the platform. These considerations should secure wide attention to the closely-argued case which Mr. Sydney Arnold has just presented in the House of Commons for the Capital Levy as a business proposition. With Mr. Arnold's preliminary estimate of the National Debt after the war as not likely to be less than eight thousand millions few will disagree. His proposal is that not less than three-quarters of this large sum should be raised by two levies: the first to take place as soon as possible after peace, and the second some two years later. Each levy should raise three thousand millions, all forms of property being valued as for death duties, and being subject to a levy graduated so as to yield an average rate of 12½ per cent. of a total capital value which Mr. Arnold estimates at twenty-four thousand millions. This figure is a good deal higher than the ordinary estimates, and we doubt whether it can be substantiated. The money income of the nation has no doubt been raised enormously by the inflated finance of the war.

But the rise in capital values must be a great deal less, the loss of foreign investments and the depreciation of large bodies of home securities being set against the new value of war stocks and the enhanced capital value of profiteering stocks. But no dispute with Mr. Arnold's estimate of capital values appreciably affects the general value of his statement of the advantages of a capital levy over the only alternative—viz., a large further rise of the income tax, retained for an indefinite period amid all the vicissitudes of fluctuating national trade. Failing a capital levy, the necessary income tax would, Mr. Arnold estimates, be not less than 7s. 6d. in the £, a figure too low to cover any of those large projects of reconstruction that are the price of social and economic security in the perilous times ahead. Indeed, we feel confident that a growing recognition of the impracticability of raising the revenue required for the post-war period by any ordinary process of taxation will continually bring in new converts to the necessity of a big early effort to cut down the burden of war indebtedness. The option, as Mr. Arnold presents it, is between a capital levy with an income tax of 2s. 6d. and no levy with an income tax rising in its higher supertax level to 12s. 6d., and liable in periods of bad trade and lower income to be raised still higher. The proposed levy would be so graduated as to leave untouched properties of less than a thousand pounds, would reach 4½ per cent. at about £5,000, 7½ at about £20,000, and 12½ at £60,000, rising to a much higher figure for great individual aggregations of wealth.

The general case for the capital levy rests on an appeal to the sound business policy of a nation. An individual who found himself heavily hampered by a load of debt would be commended for his wisdom and his honesty, if he made an early and a heavy personal effort to disembarass himself. Why should a nation be judged differently? The first salutary effect of a capital levy would be to strengthen the national credit and to give it the greater elasticity which is so essential for meeting the demands of changing times. As for the objection that certain individuals and classes would be called upon to pay more than their share towards this national relief, it cannot bear investigation. One way or another, the money must be found, and the obligation to produce it must be upon those who possess it. An early effort will reduce the aggregate payment. For, as Mr. Arnold points out, a wiping out of 6,000 millions would save a sinking fund of some 45 millions per annum, which would otherwise have to be found by the same propertied classes in the shape of higher income tax. In computing the net saving produced by a capital levy, it is right to bear in mind, however, that this commandeering of capital involves a reduction of the subsequent yield both of income tax and of ordinary death duties, and that these deductions must be taken into account in working out the net economy of the proposal.

Over the objection that a capital levy reduces the amount of liquid capital available for industrial development after the war, Mr. Arnold does not waste much time. The liquid capital taken in the levy will be used to pay off holders of war stock, and will be available in their hands for ordinary investment. Indeed, the release of many negotiable securities pledged with banks to support subscriptions to war loans will really increase the volume of mobile wealth. One of the gravest troubles of the financial situation after the war will be the enormous scale in which future savings of individuals and companies for years to come are pawned to the banks and insurance companies. An early cancelment of masses of war-loan by means of a levy would furnish a salutary relief from this embarrassment.

But the most serviceable part of Mr. Arnold's argument deals with the methods of payment which the State should employ for the capital levy in order to meet the two objections; first, that a great deal of capital-wealth is incapable of being valued for the purpose of such a levy; and, secondly, that the levy would be largely paid in forms of wealth which could not be realized for paying off the war-debt. He shows that there need be no difficulty in getting payment for his 12½ per cent. levy in already ascertained values, which can be made immediately available for the reduction of the debt.

Some small preference would secure a large proportion of the levy in war stocks, which could simply be cancelled. Payments in cash would equally serve for redemption of the short-timed borrowing. Some small advantage would be given to payment of the levy in certain first-class listed securities, which could speedily be exchanged by the Government for war-stock held by persons or companies, some slight advantage of price being given as an inducement. This would probably be welcomed by many patriotic persons who had over-loaded themselves with war-loan, and would like some liberation of the sort offered by the Government. Two other steps are proposed by Mr. Arnold further to facilitate the levy. He would empower the Government to guarantee the banks, so as to induce them to give credits to owners of land or of fixed capital who otherwise might not be able to pay their assessment in a form available for use. The banks taking mortgages of such properties would hand over to the borrower blocks of the war stocks which they had been holding, and the borrower would pay it in to the Government as his contribution to the levy. Finally, it is suggested that the rare cases to which none of these methods of payment seem applicable could be met by a half-yearly instalment system extending over a period of, say, eight years. By such a provision payment of the levy could be secured in forms immediately available for a reduction of the debt to dimensions easily handled by the ordinary annual revenue.

There is the further contention that such a confiscation of capital would be a dangerous deterrent to thrift. This is met by pointing out the emergency character of the measure. In point of fact, high income tax, which is the sole alternative, would be likely to be a far more effective interference with productive industry than the levy, for the latter is raised exclusively from pre-existing wealth, while the former threatens future production. Finally, there are two important arguments of a more general order which give strong support to the capital levy. The first is the urgent necessity of paying back as much as possible of the borrowing, while the inflated condition of the currency and other abnormal financial circumstances maintain high prices and high levels of monetary income. For if prices and incomes were falling to the pre-war level, the continued payment of the high interest upon the war debt would represent a sum in actual wealth far greater than was contemplated in the terms of the borrowing. Such a strain upon the current productivity of the nation for payment of interest upon dead capital would prove intolerable. Finally, the strong and growing public sentiment among the working classes in favor of a capital levy regarded as a war-sacrifice cannot safely be ignored. The well-founded belief that large fortunes have been made out of the havoc and misery of war by smart or fortunate business men is a source of deep and dangerous indignation. There exists a passionate demand that as much as possible of this war-loot shall be taken for the public purse. A capital levy is an imperfect but a more or less effective way of doing this. If the propertied classes persist in opposing it they run a risk far graver than they seem to understand, of letting loose the flood-tide of social revolution, sweeping away the very foundations of the economic order.

A London Diary.

LONDON, FRIDAY.

EVERY witness from and in Ireland, so far as I can gather, attests the extraordinary force of the national strike against conscription. The country is like an open grave. Men leaving for England are bidden good-bye by friends who tell them not to expect to see them again. No man, they say, will be conscripted. No woman will take the place of a conscripted man, dead or alive. No work

will be done which assists conscription. The scheme of food production will be killed. The tone is quiet, but dead earnest, religious in its intensity. The rapid growth of the Labor movement makes a new and powerful accession of strength. The Irish Transport Union and the National Union of Railwaymen between them number 60,000 members. With the Sinn Féiners they control the motive power of the country. Even Lord Milner, Ireland's new Stafford, must realize that he cannot break through such resistance at a less cost than deluging Ireland in blood. The union of Nationalism is complete. The Lord Mayor's Conference was quite harmonious, and easily arrived at a settlement; and the same may be said of the meeting with the Bishops at Maynooth. They, in turn, were unanimous, and their action was at once endorsed by the Australian hierarchy. Last Sunday there were meetings in every Catholic church in Ireland, and the pledge was taken at everyone of them. The manifesto of the Bar, endorsing the bishops' attitude, was signed by all the working Catholic King's Counsel except three, two out of the three Sergeants-at-Law, and twelve Crown Prosecutors. A Deputy-Governor and a Director of the Bank of Ireland have also signed. So strong is the movement to unity that it will probably outlast the crisis on conscription and become the basis of a new organ of self-determination. It might, of course, cover the new policy of absence from Westminster, so that in effect a modified Sinn Féinism is already operative. No Irish member will return to Parliament without authorization, and for the present the whole party abstains. This inevitably covers the Home Rule debates. Ireland will simply take what Westminster sends, and consider it on its merits.

THE country is not without enemies, but if it were Lord Northcliffe might be trusted to produce them. "No Popery" is his last "stunt" in statesmanship. Because the Irish Catholic Church has ranged itself by the side of the Irish people in resisting a denial of the first principle of nationality, the "Times" declares that "the whole fabric of religious toleration in these islands" has been "shaken to its foundations." That is cheerful news for thousands of Irish Catholic soldiers and loyal Catholics all over England, Scotland, and Wales. We are to go back to the Penal Laws because Irish Bishops happen to be Irish Nationalists. So far as the preservation of social order goes, their intervention is, of course, a good and not an evil, and the Vatican had nothing whatever to do with it. It will keep the country within bounds and under the restraint of religion at the time when Mr. George has given it every possible temptation to forget it. This is a crime, forsooth! It is an act of rescue, and a hope of salvation, not only for Ireland, but for the statesmen who have thus mishandled her.

MR. GEORGE'S Ministry meanders on, fortified with Mr. Chamberlain's fresh and original mind, and Lord Milner's impassioned zeal for democracy. But I am a little surprised at the translation of Lord Derby. Tact, intelligence, courtliness of speech and address, unswerving loyalty to friends, are precious gifts, and we all know that Lord Derby possesses them. Why, then, deprive the country of these values even in the act of placing them at the disposal of our friends in Paris? And what, precisely, was the matter with Lord Bertie? He is old, but he is vigorous. His influence in Paris happens to be the most considerable element in British diplomacy

there since the days of Lord Lyons. Lord Bertie is not a highly enlightened man, but he is a very forcible one, with forcible ways of expression. They happened exactly to suit our Allies, and their liking for our Ambassador gave him a position of singular authority at this the most critical period of the war. In comparison with them Lord Derby's appointment looks like a tragic misfit. I should have thought he would have done better with the Bolsheviks.

A GREAT deal of nonsense is talked about the difficulty of forming new Governments. My experience is that they are extremely hard to form up to the moment when an eligible head appears, and extremely easy afterwards. "There was rather a slack time in the morning," said a cynical ex-Whip the other day, speaking of the present Administration at the sublime hour of its birth, "but by evening the placard 'House Full!' was up at 10, Downing Street." That is an old experience. For example, there was the tempest-tossed Gladstone of 1880. Everybody was sure that he would never be Prime Minister again. The Whigs would never stand it. In a few hours the Whig Coalition was beaten, and he could have filled his Cabinet twice over. Precisely the same tale was told of Campbell-Bannerman. First Lord Rosebery barred the way, then the Imperialist wing. "C. B." having routed Lord Rosebery in a single encounter, disposed of the Imperialists in half-a-dozen words. So with Mr. George. The moment he falls, for his country's good, there will be half-a-dozen candidates for his place, and quite as many possible Cabinets.

No; the evil of our time is not the politician's appetite for office. It is his fear of responsibility. I have often read (and heard) the soldiers' plaint against the abdication of the politicals so far as the diplomacy of the war is concerned. "Why, in God's name, don't they speak, act, work? Are we to do everything? Of course, they should define their terms, hold their Conference, and the rest of it. What are they paid for?" [Here follow expletives.] For this reason Lord Lansdowne's breaking of the long silence was hailed in the fighting army with delight, and it is not excessive to say that for weeks he was the only popular British politician. Now, a still deeper need has arisen. I don't believe this time-saving, tide-waiting London world realizes how men of feeling have it burnt into their souls that (save for Mr. Wilson) the world is in palpably inadequate hands, that the people in power cannot rise to the level of their duty to this crucified society. Take this extract from a letter which lies on my desk. It is from a man of renown in Nonconformity, an ex-President of the Free Church Council and of his denomination. He writes:—

"I have lost all confidence in this foolish Government. It is a fearful thing that in these solemn times we should have men of this sort to represent us and to mismanage our affairs. I cannot help wishing that Asquith and Grey were in power again. I think, for the sake of the country and its salvation, they ought to face the music and turn out the awful lot who are governed by Northcliffe. God save us from our enemies and our unprincipled and foolish counsellors!"

I believe that to be as nearly as possible the voice of the country so far as, in a time of intense preoccupation, profound anxiety, and patriotic reserve, there is a voice at all. The difficulty is that a merely negative statesmanship fails to collect and classify this unformed, or half-formed, will of the mass. That is the work of the statesman-prophet, to whom some glimpse of the arm of the Lord has been revealed—and the descending sword in it.

No one is in the mind to discuss German politics; and yet Helfferich's speech, with its hint that England and Germany must choose between a policy of conciliation and one of mutual extermination, strikes me as hitting, in its hard

Teutonic way, the centre of the quarrel. It shows that some Germans have looked over the abyss and seen what is waiting them there. We at least can face our fate, whatever it be, with the knowledge that we were not guilty of making the war, and have done none of the worst things in it. What is their moral account? They must read it in the light of a hundred such deeds as the destruction of Amiens and Reims. If they would have their "victory," they must add a hundred more. Wretched people! what can then be their fate? I am sometimes reproached with not being anti-German enough: yet I often feel as if I could never speak civilly to a German again, unless he be a Liebknecht or an Edward Bernstein. If I and thousands of Radicals and Socialists feel like this, what sort of unquenchable fire is it that the Kaiser and his crew have kindled in millions of British, French, American, Italian hearts? One can divine a ritual and a literature of execration echoing to the end of the century and of the existing European order. Time to close such a war; yes, indeed! And more than time for Germany, if she expects to see a hand of human greeting stretched out to her again.

THE existing House of Commons, and even its predecessor, hardly knew Mr. Fenwick, the miner-member, who has just died. Yet a rather more democratic House might well have made him Speaker, and he now and then, I think, acted as Chairman of Committees, with excellent judgment. This group of Northern miners' sons and members were a party by themselves, and of the three chief representatives—Mr. Burt, the late Mr. Wilson, and Mr. Fenwick—I should not like to say who was the best speaker. Their style was perfect. They all spoke broad Northumbrian and perfectly classical English. Every sentence was right and rightly balanced, without weakness and without excess. Their speech was simple, like their creed of Liberal individualism, but weighted with character and conviction. What was their university? The night school and the mine, the trade union and the chapel. Result, a style that Mr. Asquith might envy.

I AM delighted to hear from Lieutenant Waugh's father that he is safe, and, though a prisoner, in good health. His commanding officer's letter, from which I quoted last week, gave little or no hope of his being alive.

I BELIEVE that the Irish Privy Council was not consulted (any more than was the Lord-Lieutenant) before the decision to conscript Ireland was taken.

A WAYFARER.

Life and Letters.

BY AN UNKNOWN DISCIPLE.

My days went swifter than a post that winter, and I heard nothing of the doings in Jerusalem nor did I see Jesus. In South Galilee gossip ran along every road, but my villages in the north were cut off from this traffic; and though the talk in them still raged about the teaching, no man knew what fate the doctrine had met in Judea.

It was Nicodemus who first told me that Jesus was in danger. By this time spring was nearly here again, and I had sent to Judea to ask for some monies that I needed. Now Nicodemus was an old man, and when the mule train came in and I saw him riding at its head, I was astonished that he should have come himself when he might as easily have sent a steward. But when he had alighted from his mule and after delivering to me the monies, had washed and refreshed himself and we were alone in the room, he said:

"I have grave news for you. I have come straight from Jerusalem, where your friend Jesus has been teach-

ing all winter. He has gone back to Capernaum now, and I have come to warn you that if he returns to Jerusalem for the Passover the Priests and Council will have his life."

"Why, what has he done?" I cried.

"The Council thinks he is dangerous," answered Nicodemus. "His fame has spread through all Judea. There is great division amongst the people and, as his followers grow, so do his opponents. There is no open discussion in Jerusalem because of the authorities, but the city is full of whispers, and rumors fly about in secret. Some say he is a good man, while others insist he is leading the people astray. Many say he is the Prophet spoken of by David, and others are sure he is the Messiah. But numerous people argue that he cannot be the Messiah as he comes from Galilee, and the Scriptures say the Messiah must come from Bethlehem, David's village, and be of David's race. It is said that men went and asked Jesus himself about this last, and he answered that as David in the Psalms called the Messiah Lord, how could it be that the Messiah was David's son? But, even with this from Jesus, many people look to see in him the fulfilment of prophecy, and the tumult grows. The Rulers are afraid. They have no wish to see the Kingdom of God established on earth. The good news that Jesus preaches is not good to those who bear rule."

"It would be," I said, "if they would only forego their ordering of other men and be content to serve."

Nicodemus looked at me out of his wise old eyes.

"The last thing men will forego is that," he said.

"Jesus is too clear-sighted not to know the risks that lie in such teaching. They will kill him for that alone."

"They cannot kill him for his teaching of the Kingdom," I said.

Nicodemus shook his head.

"They will find an excuse."

"They cannot," I cried.

"A way will be found. Do I not know? Am I not also a Ruler of Israel? But let me tell you all, and you can judge for yourself."

"Tell on," I answered, and sat silent to listen.

"The matter has not yet come before the Council as a whole, but I hear others of the Seventy talk, and so I know. Some of the Rulers have already tried to embroil Jesus with the Romans. If they could prove an offence against the Imperial law then the Romans would deal with him, and the blame of the people would fall upon them. So they have sought to show that the teaching of Jesus is the same as that taught by Judas the Gaulonite. You are too young to remember the rebellion led by this Judas, but Jesus must have heard of it. It was when the Romans first put a tax on us, in the days of the Procurator Coponius. Our people took this taxation heinously until the High Priest persuaded them to cease opposing it. But this Judas never ceased his opposition, proclaiming that the taxation was the beginning of slavery, and that the Jews were cowards if they endured to pay a tax to the Romans, seeing that God was our only Ruler. I mind me well of the misfortunes that came of all this. One violent rising after another, robberies and murders and famine. But the Romans prevailed."

"I have heard my father speak of it when he was alive," I said.

"All men spoke of it," said Nicodemus. "This Judas inflamed our nation to an extraordinary degree. Even now his followers are not all dead. But they keep quiet. If they raised a voice the Romans would not let them live a day. They will as quickly slay Jesus if they have proof that his doctrine is that of the Gaulonite. Now I will show you the full craft of the Priests and Rulers. They sent men to Jesus to seek out such evidence. These men spoke fair to him and pretended to be in sympathy with his teaching. They said, 'We know you teach God's way truly and that you are no respecter of the masks of men, but see straight through all outward shows to the inner man.' When they had thus hinted that Jesus had the like attachment to liberty that Judas preached, they said, 'Now, tell us honestly, are we right in paying taxes to Cæsar or no?'"

"It was a vile trick," I said.

"Jesus was not taken in by it," said Nicodemus. "He asked them to show him a denarius, and the men, somewhat wondering, handed him the coin. 'Whose head and inscription is this?' he said, and the men answered, 'Cæsar's.' 'Then pay to Cæsar what belongs to Cæsar and to God what belongs to God,' said Jesus."

"He is too clever to be caught," I said, and Nicodemus answered:

"Yes. But that does not endear him to the Priests and Council."

"I hate them for their enmity," I cried with passion, but Nicodemus said:

"Your friend would not have you feel thus. How can you help God to undo the evil such men do if you are so blinded by hate that you cannot see what was in their minds when they did it. Look you, I am old and have seen much of life, but I try to put myself in the place of these men and know what they feel. Cannot you do likewise?"

I was abashed and said:

"Jesus rebuked them. I have seen his anger."

"When Jesus rebuked them, was it not because they refused to show kindness? Has Jesus ever preached any but one way into the Kingdom? Your friend is gentle and great and humble. I am not as he," said Nicodemus. "I do not say you should love the Pharisees, but I ask you to show understanding of them. If they kill Jesus it will be from the best of motives."

"And not because they hate him?" I cried, unbelieving.

Nicodemus smiled sadly.

"Think you there is room in the soul of Caiaphas for so wild a passion as hate? His heart is cold. There is no fire within him. How can such a one understand Jesus? He can but think him a fool."

"No man ever looked in the face of Jesus and thought him a fool," I cried.

"To Caiaphas a clever man preaching folly is more dangerous than a fool. As you live your life, you judge your neighbors. How can these men, whose thoughts are only of bearing rule upon earth, judge of Jesus, whose message is to mind men of the spirit? There are limits to what a man may hold in his mind, and theirs are full of this world."

"It cannot be that Jesus will lose his life because of a misunderstanding?" I said.

"No Ruler will admit that he does not understand," answered Nicodemus. "And, indeed, if God's Kingdom were here there would be much change. Jesus himself says the last will be first and the first last. The Rulers do not want change. They are satisfied with the power they hold under the Romans. They think it their duty to keep our religion and customs as they were handed down to us. Jesus does not regard matters of the law as the Rulers do. He preaches more liberty than our customs have allowed. He knows that if you give a man the right to choose for himself you give him the right to make mistakes, but he has a boundless faith that God will teach if men but listen. The Priests have not this faith. They say he is upsetting all law and order. Take the question of the Sabbath. The Priests say that Jesus preaches against the Sabbath, and that, if he destroys the Sabbath, the Romans will force conscription into their armies upon us. They cannot train men who keep the seventh day as strictly as do the Jews. Even the Roman discipline would be broken by that custom. It is only the strict observance of the Sabbath that has hitherto kept us from serving."

Nicodemus was much perturbed, and my anxiety grew as I listened.

"That is the danger for Jesus," he went on. "He will be killed by men who believe in their own good intentions. The Rulers are sure they do the will of God. They think now, and they are sincere—remember I am one of them and come straight from Jerusalem—that if Jesus goes on preaching there will be a tumult in Galilee. The Galileans have always been turbulent. They may try to establish the Kingdom by throwing off the Roman rule. If there is a rising, whatever its result, the Priests and Rulers will lose. If Jesus wins, he is no friend to their power and they will go. If the Romans win, then

also our Rulers must lose, for the Romans will blame them for the rising and will take away the powers of the Council."

"But it is not in the heart of Jesus to lead a rebellion," I said.

"It is in the heart of some of his disciples," said Nicodemus. "If the Priests do not understand the teaching, neither do the disciples. Judas Iscariot has done him much harm. It is in my mind that he tries to make a tool of Jesus. I do not trust him."

"He has tried, but Jesus would not listen," I said.

"He will try to force his hand," said Nicodemus. "Judas is blinded by hate of the Romans. From what I have seen of Jesus he will not be able to sway his will. But if Judas joined Jesus, hoping for the deliverance of our nation, what will he do when he learns that Jesus does not mean rebellion? Judas is as bitter at heart as a camel. He is a dangerous man to disappoint."

My heart was sick as I listened. Nicodemus was so balanced and wise and yet so anxious.

"But there is Pilate," I cried, seeing a ray of hope. "The Council cannot kill without the Roman permit. Pilate is no friend of the Priests."

"Pilate's position is not so secure that he can risk a conflict either with the people or with the Council. He has few troops in Judea. The Rulers will bring such evidence that he cannot resist, even if he distrust it. Men say, too, that the Emperor looks at him with suspicion since he failed to bring the ensigns with Cæsar's effigies to Jerusalem. The Jews defeated Pilate there. Here again is misunderstanding. Cæsar does not know the strength of our feeling against graven images, but if he learn that his ensigns now pass Jerusalem by a back way, he may demand the worship of his effigy. The Jews will die rather than render it, and this Pilate knows. If he cannot make Cæsar understand our customs, and if, on top of this, there is tumult, and troops have to be sent from Syria, Pilate will be recalled, and perhaps lose his head. There is another matter, too, that men speak of—Pilate needs the favor of the High Priest in his plan for bringing water by aqueduct to Jerusalem. These Romans like to leave such memorials of their rule. Pilate wants to pay for this out of the Temple treasury. Where else can he find the money? If he is to use the Corban must he not be friends with the High Priest? But you know Pilate, even as I do."

"I have always found him a just man," I said.

"Just, but hard," said Nicodemus. "What is one life to him if he can purchase order by sacrificing it? He has shed much blood before and will again."

We fell silent again, I pondering, and then another hope, weak indeed, struck me, and I said:

"Jesus is not under the jurisdiction of Pilate. He is of Galilee and under Herod. Herod has shown great interest in him and sent for him."

Nicodemus shook his head.

"Herod is like all men of his sort and curious of novelty. Did Jesus go to see him?"

"No, he refused," I answered.

"Then Herod will do nothing to help him. He may be angry if Pilate usurps his authority, but he does not want sedition in Galilee. If he killed Jesus the people would blame him, but Herod is a fox. He will let Pilate do it, and put the blame on the Romans. And in any case the Priests will arrest Jesus in Jerusalem, and he is under Pilate there."

"They cannot arrest him without evidence that he preaches rebellion," I persisted.

"You do not understand their craft," said Nicodemus. "If they fail in that, as they must fail, Jesus being so wise, they have another contrivance. They will indict him for treason."

"Treason? How can that be?" I asked.

"Our Priests maintain that the laws under which they hold their power were given us by God. Therefore, to teach the breaking of them is blasphemy. The desecration of the Sabbath may seem a small matter to Pilate, but the Priests will say that Jesus preaches that he is the son of God and that the divine lives in him."

"Of course he does," I said. "It is part of his teaching that God is our father and has his dwelling

within us. I have often heard him teach so. And if God is our father, must we not be his sons?"

"Our rulers are blind," said Nicodemus. "If they had feeling they could burst the scales that blind their eyes. But cold-hearted they listen to Jesus and when he tells of a spiritual kingdom, they think he desires to found an earthly one, and when he tells of the divine in man they say he teaches that he himself is God. The punishment for blasphemy is death. They mean to kill him. Let me tell you more. There is a man, a mason, who had a withered arm. Jesus healed him."

"I know. I saw him do it," I said.

"The man is working at his trade again. The Pharisees were angry with him for his gratitude to Jesus, and to stop his mouth they told him that Jesus claimed to be God, and the man answered that of a certainty he was more than man, for such kindness was never shown by a man to men. The Pharisees are full of wrath with the man, but he blazens it abroad, and his testimony will help to kill Jesus. That is not the only thing. There has already been an attempt to arrest Jesus. The Chief Priest sent some of the officials to bring him before the Council, but the men found him teaching, and waited until he had finished, wanting to bring him away quietly, for fear of the people. I was at the Council myself when the men returned without Jesus. The Chief Priest asked them why they had not brought Jesus, and all the excuse the men could offer was that they had never heard any man speak as he did. The Chief Priest was so taken aback that he could only say:

"Has he deceived you too, as he has the common people, who are ignorant of the law?"

"Another of the Pharisees said to the men:

"The common people are cursed in their ignorance. None of the Rulers or Pharisees have been taken in by him.' I thought all this so unfair that I asked if it was according to our Law to judge a man without having heard his defence, or even knowing anything of his deeds. They all turned on me then, and Jonathan, the son of Annas, said, sneering, 'Are you also from Galilee? Search the Scriptures and see if they say that a Prophet is to come out of Galilee!'"

I laid my hand on the hand of Nicodemus, the bravery of the frail old man so touched me, and for a time we sat silent. Then he went on.

"There was another day—it was Malchus who told me this—when Jesus was teaching in the Temple Court and the Priests themselves came to confront him. They said to him: 'Tell us by what authority you act? Who gave you your authority?' Jesus answered them: 'I too will ask you a question. Give me an answer first. Was the baptism that John gave of divine or of human origin?' You see what a dilemma this put them in? If they said Divine, Jesus would ask them why they had refused to believe in it, and they dared not say human because of the people around them, who all believed that John was inspired."

"What did they do?" I asked.

"Oh, they gave it up. They said they did not know, and Jesus at once answered that then he, too, would not answer them as to his authority for his deeds."

"Is there no way to save him?" I asked.

"I have done what I could and failed," said Nicodemus. "It was for that I came north. For you may do something. Your father was a friend to Caiaphas and you know Pilate. You must go to Jerusalem. At the least you can warn Jesus and perchance withdraw him for a time."

For a moment hope lit up my heart. Then I remembered, and the flame died away.

"Jesus will never flee," I said. "He has it in his mind that he may have to suffer. I mind me of things he has said. He knows that if he goes to the Passover he goes most surely to his death."

"Nevertheless, we may save him. And if not——" Nicodemus paused.

"If not?" I repeated.

"Death is the right of all," said Nicodemus.

"Must he die?" I cried out in anguish.

"If he resist, the people will rise. Jesus would never thus cause desolation. But how can he resist?

Has he not taught that wrong is never to be repaid by wrong, or violence by violence? If he resists, the Pharisees will soon point out that his teaching has a flaw. Has he not said that they taught what they did not mean to follow?"

I buried my face in my hands.

"Son," said Nicodemus—and in his voice was the great tenderness of the aged who have learnt wisdom in the service of God—"Lift up your heart. We will do what man can. It may be possible to persuade Caiaphas to take no action against Jesus, seeing that the teaching means peace and love only. Let us go to Capernaum and see Jesus, and then we can travel on to Judea."

And so we set out for Jerusalem. But we rode under black shadow, the shadow of misunderstanding, a shadow that darkened the world.

THE NEW GIBBON.

[A FRAGMENT.]

Two years after the system of recruitment for the Army by general Conscription had been for the first time established in Great Britain, the Government of the day considered it advantageous further to extend the operation of the Law by raising the limit of age within which the manhood of the country was liable to Military Service, by including Ireland in the provision, and by curtailing the schedules of previous exemption. The Ordinance embodying these regulations, known as the Fourth Military Service Act, was passed hurriedly through both Houses of Parliament in April, 1918, its passage being facilitated by the natural alarm arising from the sudden, though temporary, successes of the enemy against the northern and central sections of the Allied defences in France. With the effect of this Act upon the national industries and commerce, and upon the subsequent history of the neighboring Island as parcel of the Kingdom dubiously entitled United, we will treat in subsequent chapters of this narrative. But one proposal advanced in the Bill, though afterwards withdrawn, we may immediately discuss, owing to the nice and important controversy to which it gave occasion.

Among other classes to which exemption from the compulsory clauses of previous Acts had been granted, the Priests and Deacons of the Established Church, together with the clergy and ministers of definitely religious bodies, had been expressly denominated. The reasons for conferring this particular privilege upon the clerical profession, though never actually stated, had been generally assumed; for it was imagined that ecclesiastical functions were distinct from military action, if not opposed to its exercise. In their laudable anxiety to swell the ranks of the imperilled armies in France, the Government, however, resolved to submit this common supposition to more logical examination, and, as was to be anticipated, they discovered no sufficiently reasonable grounds for maintaining the moral distinction between cleric and lay. By completely cancelling exemption on the plea of religious occupation, they might, perhaps, have added to the forces a number of physically well-nurtured and even athletic young men, estimated at several thousand bayonets; but, apprehending too violent a shock to irrational but pervading prejudice, they followed the path of compromise, habitually pursued in this Island, and permitted the clerical recruit to exercise a choice between combatant service (which implied the duty of killing enemies whenever possible) and non-combatant service, under which were included the comparatively innocuous offices of preaching, healing, entertainment, and the ministration of supplies.

Contemporary documents afford little evidence as to the causes which induced the somewhat hasty withdrawal of this characteristic compromise. One episcopalian authority of eminence, it is true, whilst himself strongly supporting the cause of clerical belligerency, and submitting personally, as was reported, to physical preparation calculated to promote warlike efficiency, never-

theless apprehended an increase of juvenile exuberance if the controlling influence of the village or urban clergyman were removed, since, with zealous and perhaps exaggerated esteem, he regarded the clergyman as standing *in loco parentis* to the young of his cure during the compulsory absence of the fathers abroad. Jocosely adapting a metaphor from the exigencies of the time, he further advised the retention of the clergy at home in order to pile up the spiritual munitions, for which he dutifully assumed an efficacy superior to material explosives. But among the dominating exponents of Christian ethic, he stood almost alone.

Even before the withdrawal of the conscribing clause, the Archbishop of Canterbury wrote to inform the Premier that, in his opinion, the clerical exemption, which he had supported in earlier Acts, should now be cancelled, thus arguing his former conception to have been based rather upon expediency than principle. No sooner was the withdrawal of compulsion announced in Parliament than several Bishops and other eminent Christians, including the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, and Sir Robert Perks, a distinguished Wesleyan Methodist, hurried to assure the public that neither they nor their co-religionists had influenced the Government in adopting this unwelcome course. Prompted by a rivalry in sectarian enthusiasm, they pointed with justified exultation to the large numbers of clergy from the particular faith of each who had served as chaplains or other officers, often exposing themselves to the risks of ordinary men, sometimes with heroic and even fatal determination. Some also recalled with tragic pride the conduct of clergy who, too old for personal service, had emulated the ancient Patriarch in freely offering their sons for sacrifice. One even denounced the exemption as an insult to the manhood of his order, and, forgetting the high services of Catholic priests in the French army, attributed the calamity of the respite to the influence of a Vatican suspected of German proclivities. Speaking for the 700 clergy in his diocese, the Bishop of Salisbury declared that all who came under the clause would have submitted to compulsion without hesitation or reluctance, and, with a tang of refreshing acidity, maintained that the work of the Church would have suffered no serious injury, "provided that the people were prepared, as in most cases they would be, to forego for a time some of their privileges and to be deprived of the luxury, not always appreciated, of Church services within an easy walk of their homes."

More conspicuous for military fervor than even for learning, the Bishop of London, who commanded a full battalion of clergy (rather more than 1,000 men, some of whom, however, had exceeded the increased military age), went still further in announcing his intention of using his episcopal authority to summon eligible priests and deacons to the standards of war. Laying it down as an incontrovertible axiom of faith that one sermon a week suffices for mankind's spiritual requirements, he proposed calling to arms such of the adolescent and middle-aged clergy as were not essential for the satisfaction of this inward craving. At the same time he warned a feminine congregation in St. Paul's against entertaining an undercurrent of feeling that there was anything wrong in opposing force with force. Owing to his intimacy with the Divine purposes, he was able to assure them that, to the All-seeing Eye of God, there was nothing strange in the sight of women polishing shells or clergy making aeroplanes in order to break in pieces a tyranny which had to be broken before the Kingdom of God could be established on earth.

In uttering this timely warning, the Bishop appears to have contemplated a heresy which had grievously exercised the Christian Commonwealth, at all events since the age of Constantine. The heresy consisted in accepting the precepts of the Divine Master regarding peaceful behavior and the non-resistance to evil as literally true and universally binding. The records of Diocletian in his vain attempts to restrain the persecuting fury of his colleague, Galerius, tend to prove that this heretical opinion was generally accepted as orthodox among the

primitive followers of the Nazarene; and, in fact, certain Romans of distinction and military rank who were executed for refusal to employ carnal weapons against the enemies of the State, were received by the Early Church as saints among the noble Army of Martyrs. Since, however, the course of the world's history, and the increasing interdependence of religion and government, revealed the extreme difficulty of conducting the affairs of State under the conditions of inspired paradox, such opinions have long been widely condemned, and imitators of those embarrassing martyrs, however grievous their well-merited persecution, could entertain no expectation of a place upon the Authorized Calendar. During the period now under review, one Episcopal representative of Orthodoxy, indeed, proposed that they should be specially submitted to the peril of aerial missives hurled by hostile machinations from the very clouds.

On the whole, therefore, we may conclude that, even apart from a negligible minority who advocated the formation of a completely Clerical Division to be employed as a "forlorn hope" whenever occasion required, the renewed exemption of the clergy was ill-received among the clergy themselves, especially by the older and more authoritative members of the Order. Many of the younger priests also, torn between unwillingness to desert even an unheeding flock and a desire for more definite activity in their country's service, were exposed to all the torments of uncertainty and hesitation, nor could they accept with entire confidence commands issued upon ecclesiastic authority but lacking the legal sanction of Parliamentary enactment.

Short Studies.

WHAT IRISH PEOPLE ARE SAYING.

MIDWAY up the hill the motor-power gave out, and the tram-car came to a standstill. In the sudden silence that fell everyone relaxed into more comfortable positions, expectant of the usual ten minutes' halt.

But the silence was not that of dullness, for the two long rows of men and women who sat facing one another were simmering with excitement; and, as a newsboy rushed past yelling "Irish Conscription Bill Receives the Royal Assent," they all came to the boil together in one low, rich murmur.

"They say they'd as soon be shot on their own door-steps," remarked a fat market-woman philosophically to the tram in general; then, savoring the universal sympathy, she added, "And who'd blame them, poor dickenses? They'd get a decent burial at home, anyhow."

A kindly looking old woman opposite wiped her nose with a skilful pass of the hand, and groaned agreement. "Not that I'd mind my boy going—not if it was safe," she said; "but they do be sayin' that them Germans are terrible cross, and have such weepens as never was."

"Well, for my part, if it comes to fightin', I'd have more pleasure in gettin' my own back out of the English," put in a working-man, with the mouth and chin of Bill Sykes, and a pair of kindly, humorous eyes above them. The eyes were elits now, and the mouth and chin distinctly ugly looking. "What do I know about the Germans? But it's d—d little I don't know about the English!" This sentiment aroused a laugh of general approval, and the speaker's eyes widened back to kindness again. "All the same, if them blackguards could do the decent thing by us Irish, I wouldn't say but what I might have a slap at the Germans myself, for by all accounts they're as bad as the English, only worse."

An elderly farmer stroked his billy-goat beard doubtfully. "I wouldn't go as far as that," he said, judicially, "but there's a quare lot of devils let loose in the world at the present time." He leant forward and spat portentously through the open door.

"I had my doubts in my own mind that there was some divilment in them sugar cards, and now I know it!" (Sensation.)

"I hope, all the same, the people will have sinse, and not try to stand up to machine-guns," a respectable woman put in sadly. "As I always say to my husband, 'if they do take you, sure can't you refuse to put on your clothes?' He's a hefty man, an' it would take six more men to do that same!" she added, with pride.

"Maybe, ma'am, they'd be shootin' him then," put in the market-woman, with polite interest.

"Not if they were all to sign a Covenant to do the like—

an' they will, too," the fond wife replied. "I tell you they hasn't got the better of us yet—Carson an' his crew! There's more than them that can sign Covenants."

"Maybe they'd shoot them all then, God help us!" the market-woman went on, rapidly blessing herself.

"Let them!" almost shouted a fierce-looking boy in the corner. "It'll cost them so many thousands of rounds of ammunition, but they won't have conscripted the Irish!"

A "Daily Mail" in the corner opposite, which screened the only frock-coat in the tram, trembled, crackled, and finally subsided, to allow an old gentleman with protruding eyes to emerge.

"Young man," he said, solemnly, choosing the last speaker to vent his views on, "Surely you have heard of Belgium and Northern France?"

"Yes, sir," replied the boy, civilly, and then his mouth twisted cynically. "An' I've also heard of the Curragh an' Bachelor's Walk."

The old man turned away in pain, and addressed the conductor, a fine, upstanding man with a frank face. "I'm sure you'll go, my man," he said.

"Never!" said the conductor, with decision. "It would go agin my stomach to fight for the English."

"But this is as much Ireland's war as England's."

The tram-car's load repudiated this statement with a unanimous hoot of derision, and the conductor acted as their spokesman.

"Well, sir, I'm only a working-man, an' I'm told this war is bein' fought for Democracy; that England is out to save small nations. Very good! This is a small nation, isn't it? Where does democracy come in under Carson an' the likes of him?"

"Divil mend him!" remarked the market-woman, prayerfully.

"And what would you do if you got Colonial Home-Rule?" the old man in the frock-coat asked, with icy reserve.

"Oh, I'd go quick enough then," the conductor replied, genially—"I'd be fighting for my own country then!"

"You'll never get it!" the old man snapped, angrily, preparing to leave the tram.

"Maybe not, sir," the conductor said, making way for him. "Then all I can say is, it's d—d poor material they'll get out of Ireland to do any fighting."

And the tram woke up suddenly again, and started to finish the hill.

Communications.

A PLEA FOR THE LITTLE THEATRE.

To the Editor of THE NATION.

SIR,—I have recently read a book upon the "Little Theatres of America" that has made a great impression upon me. In 1911 there were, apparently, three little theatres in America; to-day, there are between fifty and sixty. With scarcely an exception, these little theatres had their beginnings in the same way. A small group of young enthusiasts, of actors, dramatists, scenic and costume designers, and those interested in methods of stage lighting and production generally, banded together, and starting with very little money, got hold of a platform anywhere they could, fitted it up for themselves, and gave a performance. Perhaps the most striking record is that of the Washington Square Players.

In 1914, a few friends who lived in the same neighborhood, and who used to meet in a local bookshop, fitted up a store at the back of the shop and gave a performance of a Dunsany play to an audience of forty. In 1915 they hired, for occasional performances, the Bandbox Theatre that seats an audience of about three hundred. In the same year they were able to take the theatre for a season of regular nightly shows. In the next year they took the Comedy Theatre, which holds seven hundred, and there at the present time they are regularly installed. They have taken a seven-storey building opposite their theatre, where they carry on the business part of the undertaking, make their own scenery and dresses, and run a school.

Although that may be the most striking example, there are many others up and down the country that from the very humblest beginnings have made good, and now possess their own attractively-decorated little theatre which they have fitted up for themselves in some hall, or in a store, in a disused fish-house, in a stable, in a one-time gin saloon, and so on, with a stage adequately equipped as to lighting &c., and seating comfortably an audience of anything between seventy and five hundred. Here are a few of the authors whose plays have been produced by one or other of these fifty little theatres:—Shaw, Maeterlinck, Schnitzler, Andreyeff, Shake

Shakespeare, Dunsany, Barrie, Tchekoff, Bennett, Besier, Bjornson, Ibsen, Brieux, Brighouse, Rupert Brooke, Browning, Calderon, Cannan, Phillpotts, Housman, Milton, Hankin, Knobloch, Strindberg, Sheridan, Wilde, Molière, Echegaray, Galsworthy, Lady Gregory, Anatole France, Sudermann, Yeats, Gorky, Houghton, Evrino, Masefield, Euripides, St. John Ervine, Mrs. Havelock Ellis, Wedekind, Tagore, de Musset, Synge. In addition there are many unfamiliar names, for each theatre is producing its local dramatists. The majority of the plays produced have been one-act plays.

I have said that those who started these theatres were not only actors and writers, but those interested in all the branches of dramatic production, and, as far as one can gather, the chief common characteristic of their productions is the attempt at harmony in the ensemble—in scenic design, color, stage-dressing, lighting, costume and music; all done simply and cheaply, but with a satisfying completeness in result, often astonishingly beautiful or striking in its very simplicity, and with an adventurous boldness in discovering how best to bring out the meaning and spirit of a play.

Little theatres, such as these American little theatres, are not peculiar to America. The movement is comparatively modern—the first little theatre was, I believe, started in a back street in Paris by a clerk, André Antoine, in 1887; since then little theatres run by those who love the art of the theatre to consummate that love, have sprung up throughout Europe. They exist in Russia, in Germany, in Poland. There is a little theatre in Stockholm, in Budapest, in Brussels. In some cases the rise from their humble beginnings has been splendidly rapid. In 1890 a few amateurs founded the now world-famous Moscow Art Theatre, and, six years later, toured Europe. Max Reinhardt began by giving one-act plays among a few friends in a Berlin restaurant.

In the year before the war a little theatre was started in Paris, with most encouraging results, although the war has eclipsed it.

There is, to-day, in this country a considerable widespread feeling for a theatre that in its attempts and ideals should be other than that of the commercial theatre; an "after-war theatre" is already being discussed. The history of the little theatres in Europe and America is significant for us here. There are in England to-day a few of just the same sort of young people who started the various little theatres abroad. Not only young actors and actresses, but young artists and designers, who have at present practically no chance in the ordinary business theatre, and who have therefore to find other means of self-expression, but whose real gifts or genius may be in the work of the theatre. In other countries such enthusiasts have got together and begun in the very humblest way. There is a lot to be said for such a beginning. In the first place those that make the venture have had, for the most part, little or no previous experience in the actual running of a theatre in all its departments. Mistakes there are bound to be; but mistakes, if one begins humbly, need not be disastrous. On the other hand, if one begins with an elaborate scheme, with a large list of subscribers, with much heralding and so forth, mistakes are apt to be fatal. It is rather like the difference between sowing a seed which is very tiny at first but which grows naturally strong, and bedding-out a semi-grown plant which looks imposing, but if the soil isn't quite right or the sun, or the wind or the rain goes wrong, very probably dies—and there is nothing then but disappointment and a disinclination to try again.

After all, if those who start a little theatre are the right people to do it, and if their work throughout is in the right direction, their venture will grow very quickly, and they will but profit by their mistakes. And then subscribers will come along, knowing to some extent to what they are subscribing, and, should any wealthy patrons wish to help financially, money could be given to supply some definite known want—the re-seating of the theatre, a lighting improvement, or whatever it might be.

One of the most healthy and encouraging signs is that this desire for a new theatre comes in great part from the Labor party. "Labor party" is an inadequate definition. With human institutions—political, social, religious—in the melting pot, definitions are difficult. But the thought of the world seems rapidly to be gathering apart into two distinct opposing forces, and each force is rapidly becoming more aware of itself and more aware of the other. On one side are those who would make a few surface changes but who would reimpose the old conditions of society, and on the other side those who would have a world of fundamentally different ideals and of fundamentally different institutions which are the outward expression of ideals. With this side stands the vital sections of labor; and it is essential that the little theatre, however little it should be in its actual beginnings, should not be little or narrow in its ideals, should not be merely the plaything of a clique, but should keep in touch with the vital forces that are striving for a new world.

That is one essential need. The other essential need is for a permanent home. A building of its own where the company can, besides rehearsing and giving their performances,

make their own scenery and dresses and be continually experimenting in all kinds of methods of production.

Keeping these two needs always in view, let us briefly consider, very tentatively, how a little theatre might be actually run in this country, either now, or immediately upon the coming of peace. First, a few keen people interested in the various branches of production—and a few pounds in a common fund. There are audiences ready-made. In London are several halls, where the more eager members of the Labor party hold regular meetings; these halls already have small platforms, and some, at least, are fitted with electric light—and where that is, an undaunted and ingenious electrician can work wonders. Let the little company get ready a one-act play and offer it to these regular audiences, at the same hour at which they are used to meet, lasting about the same length of time for which they are used to stay—let them, in fact, just for one night take the place of the weekly speaker or lecturer. I believe that wherever such a hall and audience exist, a welcome is waiting for such a company; and if the company make good, they would soon have a regular round of visits fixed up and a growing repertory of short plays.

The next thing for them then would be their permanent home. For that, their original few pounds would have to be increased to a few hundred pounds.

Existing theatres in the West End are out of the question because of rents; but it should be possible to find a hall in some central locality, such as Bloomsbury, which could be turned into a little theatre. Two of the most beautiful and satisfactory little theatres in America were, a year or two ago, a gin saloon of most evil repute, and a disused fish storage.

By the time the company were ready for a permanent home they would have made mistakes and learnt from them, would have a repertory of plays, would be known in certain labor circles, and, in addition, would have been seen by those who are really interested in the theatre idea. This should render easier the finding of the few hundred pounds. Once established it would be essential to keep in touch with the Labor centres; that would mean the continuing of visits to the local audiences. The company might play four nights a week in its own home, and visit on the other two nights. There is more than one lot of people in London who want to produce good plays well, and on the two nights that the Company were away visiting, they should have very little difficulty—provided their little theatre were well done—in finding tenants. The necessary condition would be that the tenants should uphold the traditions of the theatre.

It might be found possible to extend the visiting process, and tour the towns all over England, Scotland, and Wales, where there are live labor centres. In such towns as Manchester, Glasgow, Ipswich, Coventry, and many others, enthusiastic audiences of hundreds gather regularly to hear speakers and lecturers, and it might be possible to have a touring company continuously on the road. America has a most successful touring little theatre of this sort—"The Portmanteau Theatre." It can be put up in any hall in a few hours, and packed up into a compact and entirely manageable size for the journey; it cost only a few hundred pounds; the most beautiful effects can be obtained in it. Incidentally, on the Christmas night of 1915, it was set up in one of the public parks of New York, and its audience was a huge crowd of the homeless and outcast of the city, who dragged up the park benches and enjoyed a programme of some of the finest one-act plays the world has produced.

Such a plan as I have been outlining is altogether tentative. Each and all of the very many little theatres have had their own peculiar difficulties to face and have faced them, and in the big majority of cases, overcome them, in their various ways.

But the point to emphasize is this; that these little theatres have risen as the direct outcome of the desire for a new dramatic life in other countries; that such a desire is making itself evident in our country to-day, and the little theatre solution is one that might well be tried. And if it were successful, the possibilities for it are very great. Already the network of little theatres in America are linking up. They are exchanging plays, and sometimes companies. Many are producing their own local dramatists. This is one reason that so many one-act plays are done. Apart from the intrinsic value of this form of dramatic art, that has no place in the commercial theatre, the one-act play is a more manageable form for more or less inexperienced dramatists. A writer may have a genuine idea which he or she can make really interesting and worthy of production as a short play, but which he or she cannot sustain through three acts. So all sorts of new vital little plays, dealing with local conditions of society, of labor, of folk-lore, and so forth, are first produced in the local little theatre, and are eventually shown to audiences thousands of miles away. It should be possible for our little theatre to have representatives watching the work of the other little theatres, not only in America, but in Paris, Petrograd, Berlin, Moscow, Stockholm, Japan—all the world over—and so be able to show to our local audiences here, the conditions of life, the strivings, the ideals, the poetry of other peoples the world over. Indeed,

the little theatres of the world might become of very real social importance. I spoke of the two opposing forces of the world—of those who are striving for a new world, and of those who would re-establish the old. The aim of the latter will be, as always, to separate the peoples; the aim of the former to internationalize. The little theatres might become a great internationalizing force. Such work from them will be all the more necessary because the Cinema will be used by the old-worlders to keep the people apart. The Cinema will be used as the Press has been used. It is a great weapon in the hands of the capitalists. Already hundreds of "propaganda films" are being turned out under the direction of the various Governments. To-day they are being used to present half-truths, to obscure the complete vision of the world tragedy. To-morrow they will be used to set before their vast audiences any point of view that the few who are in touch with the governments, and who control the big sums of money needed for the production of big films, wish to present.

The little theatres would not "propagate" by the direct method. But they would bring into closer contact the eager vital people of the world, and they would promote the essential deep sense of unity. It is not huge sums of money that are needed, but courage and perseverance, and among those who start the new little theatre in England, however humbly, a great love of the art of the theatre. And these things, I believe, exist.—Yours, &c.,

MILES MALLESON.

Letters to the Editor.

THE CARNAGE.

SIR,—Is it possible that sane human beings can longer endure, without protest or appeal, this human—or inhuman—carnage? Surely the time has come when the people of each belligerent nation must arise, in the sheer agony of their patriotism, and demand that hostilities shall cease, and that, while the armies rest from their slaughtering, the voice of reason and cool judgment be heard once more; that a Council be called of chosen representatives from all civilized countries whom the war affects—neutral as well as belligerent—such Council being required impartially to consider the main questions in dispute, and decide them in accordance with the highest principles of justice and moral right.

Sooner or later some such Tribunal must be set up. Why, then, later and not sooner? For it must be obvious now, to all right-thinking persons, that no amount of ruthless and destructive warfare can decide those questions. What purpose can it serve to *prolong* the murderous strife—at once so ghastly and so grotesque—seeing that the opposing forces can achieve nothing but death and destruction? And what is our *Patriotism worth*, if we continue to assent to this so futile slaughter of our brave men, this devastation of towns and villages and fruitful fields, this ruinous wasting of the common necessities of life? It is *human beings*, not bits of territory, that make most dear to us the Motherland or Fatherland we love so much.

Surely the appeal which millions of human hearts are silently making to their rulers ought now to be *heard*, demanding a temporary armistice, and a conference of sane men (and women), whose business it shall be to formulate at least some preliminary terms of a just and reasonable peace.—Yours, &c.,

W. J. JUPP.

April 22nd, 1918.

STRUGGLE OR SERVICE?

SIR,—With the greatest interest I have read your summing-up of the contents of Dr. Nicolai's book "Biologie des Kriegeres," a book that has not yet come into my hands. Dr. Nicolai's way of showing that the famous formula "struggle for existence" cannot be applied to the question of war is very interesting and certainly quite right. But I venture to go still a little further. Is struggle for existence the real guiding principle in the world of Nature? Is not "mutual aid" even between different species quite as noticeable? May it not be that Darwin—unconsciously perhaps—grasped the principle of the "struggle for existence" from admiration of that of free competition *between men*? The time when Darwin grew to maturity was the time of victory for the great ideas of Liberalism, free trade and free competition. May I mention the following dates: 1846, the Repeal of the Corn Duties; 1849, the abolition of the Navigation Acts; 1860, the Commercial Treaty with France; the first edition of "The Origin of Species" appeared in 1859 when Darwin was fifty years old. Did the idea of the "struggle for existence" throughout the realm of Nature come to him as an intuition prepared by admiration of the Liberal idea of free competition? If so the way of reasoning is just the inverse of what it is naturally thought to be; from the "struggle for existence" among animals and plants it is usually inferred that this principle must also guide the conduct of men, and amongst them must

be developed even to a higher degree. Instead of this inference I suppose the way of thinking has been the following: The promising prospects of mankind through the adoption of the free competition principle so impressed the mind of the young naturalist that his observant eye, fixed upon the struggle in Nature, overlooked the fact of mutual aid and even self-sacrifice that really is to be found in her.

It will become necessary to obtain a new outlook on the world. The world cannot be saved through the "struggle" of each individual against the others, but through *service* and, I believe, still more through sacrifice.—Yours, &c.

O. F. OLDEN.

Stavanger, Norway. April 8th, 1918.

COUNT CZERNIN AND THE TCHECHS.

SIR,—We deem it our duty to protest against your suggestion that Count Czernin came of "a noble Tchech family which had not lost all sense of Bohemian nationality." We challenge you to give us an instance when Czernin would have expressed his sympathy with the cause of Bohemia. Although of one of our ancient noble families his sympathies are all with the Germans and with Vienna, as is the case with the rest of the Bohemian nobility, almost all of whom are foreigners and renegades. How otherwise could you explain that the Tchechs constantly and unanimously protested against Czernin, especially during the peace negotiations with Russia and in their declaration of January 6th?

As regards your correspondent, Mr. Coe, apparently he knows nothing of the appalling Austrian barbarities in Galicia, Bosnia, and Serbia. By cold-blooded murders and famine the Austrians reduced the population of the latter by one-third. And as regards the plea that Austria should be regarded in a more friendly spirit and that there is hope in detaching her, I would refer your correspondent only to THE NATION of April 13th, in which it is rightly pointed out that it is now in any case certain that Austria has not the power to disassociate herself from Germany, whether she wants to or not. As for the rest, Mr. Coe may rest assured that Austria is just as brutal and treacherous as Germany. There is no reason whatever why there should be any sympathy between the British Liberals and Democrats and the reactionary "Austrian and Magyar oppressors," as Prince Liechnowsky calls them, who is also a witness of Austria's responsibility for this war. It was Austria's existence, based on corruption and racial oppression, which was a constant menace to peace, and which must be destroyed, and not preserved, by the Allies.—Yours, &c.,

VLADIMIR NOSEK.

Thanet House, 231, Strand, London, W.C. 2.

Poetry.

TWO SPRING SONGS.

I.—FROM THE CHINESE.

For hoarded gold I would not sell
One hour of this spring night.
How sweet the fragrance of the flowers!
How mild the moon's pale light!

Above I hear a singer's voice,
A softly breathing flute;
Here in the hall my hammock swings.
'Tis night. All else is mute.

SU SHA (A.D. 1036-1101).

II.—FROM A GERMAN PRISON CAMP.

SPRING comes so quietly you cannot tell
When it is near.
Nor eye nor ear
Could well discern the little buds that swell,
The things that change the year;
Only a feeling in the air!

Joy comes so quietly you cannot know
Where sorrows part,
Nor by what art
The weary hours of life can lovely grow
And long-sought rapture start;
Only a feeling in the heart!

PETER WARREN (2nd Lt., R.F.C., Holzminden), 1918.

The World of Books.

THE "NATION" OFFICE, THURSDAY NIGHT.

THE following is our weekly selection of books which we commend to the notice of our readers:—

- "The Eclipse of Russia." By Dr. E. J. Dillon. (Dent. 16s. net.)
 "The British Campaign in France and Flanders, 1916." By Sir A. Conan Doyle. (Hodder & Stoughton. 6s. net.)
 "Last Songs." By Francis Ledwidge. With an Introduction by Lord Dunsany. (Jenkins. 3s. 6d. net.)
 "Remnants." Essays by Desmond MacCarthy. (Constable. 5s. net.)
 "Attack." An Infantry Subaltern's Impressions of July 1st, 1916. By E. G. D. Liveing. With an Introduction by John Masefield. (Heinemann. 1s. 6d. net.)
 "From Bapaume to Passchendaele." By Philip Gibbs. (Heinemann. 6s. net.)
 "Pieces of Eight." By Richard le Gallienne. (Collins. 6s. net.)

* * *

"ETERNITY," says one of the Proverbs of Hell, "is in love with the productions of time," and is perhaps more inclined to the spiral than the perpendicular theory of human evolution. "The life of a people," wrote a modern satirist who will certainly have a house to himself in eternal memory, "is but a succession of miseries, crimes, and follies." And, likewise, visions of human welfare were not born yesterday, and our consolation is that, if they don't succeed, yet they persist. At any rate, if modern Hubris can boast of inventing a weapon which can kill at seventy-five miles distance, it is not so original when it comes to the surprising notion that there is no particular reason why men should go on killing each other at all. That notion struck one man three hundred years ago, and as he was, what is truly extraordinary, a king, he set about making it a matter of practical politics.

* * *

HENRY IV., the "Béarnois," as the Catholic League called him, the Henry of Navarre, "who comes as a boon and a blessing" to the romantic novelist, is really like a king of fairyland. Not because of his jocularities, his feats of battle, his easy manners, his mistresses, or the incredible story of how he became King of France, but because he genuinely loved his people. Other men before him had dreamed of a universal peace, and Erasmus, in the "Complaint of Peace," a century before, had tried to enlist the predatory potentates of Europe in a general scheme of disarmament and reconciliation. But Henry it was, who, immediately after the period of the religious wars and the last of the mountebank Valois, at a time so corrupt that even an impassive chronicler like L'Estoile cried out: "There is no more truth, no more justice, no more mercy"—who with Sully elaborated the precise tactics and constitution of a League of European Nations to the final point when the knife of Ravallac destroyed a great man and a greater hope at a blow.

* * *

THE authority for Henry's "great design" is the thirtieth book of Sully's Memoirs. The author of the "Life of the Duke d'Epemon," translated by our Charles Cotton, the contemporary annalists De Thou, Péréfixe, and Marshal Bassompierre, all refer in terms of praise to the scheme, and the "Discours" of L'Abbé de Saint Pierre declare categorically that, had Henry lived to execute his plan, "he would have procured a benefit which would have been the source of all those sweets which usually flow from an uninterrupted and universal tranquillity," and Henry himself been "the greatest man the world has ever or probably ever will produce." But these are mere onlookers. It was Sully, with his conviction that "the happiness of mankind can never arise from war," and that wars are the occasion and result "of a general corruption of manners," who knew Henry's mind and gave solid expression to his purpose. At first he was sceptical, owing, as he says delightfully, "to that cold, cautious, and unenterprising temper which makes so considerable a part of my character." But once converted to the principle "that all Europe might be regulated and governed as one great family," he set to work with that Fabian patience and aptitude for detail which soon sent chimera packing. It is pleasant to think, too, that Queen Elizabeth was a party to

the "great design." It was only after her death and the failure of Sully's embassy to the indolent and vacillating James (in spite of the efforts of his charming son, Prince Henry) that the two men were left to their own resources.

* * *

THE plan was part religious and part political. The acute religious differences, not only between Catholic and Reformer, but Lutheran and Calvinist, were to be settled by toleration upon the existing basis of distribution. The Protestants of the Low Countries, that is to say, were to allow liberty of conscience and worship to their Catholics, and the Catholics of France to their Huguenots. Sully was not, indeed, so enlightened as William the Silent, who ordered the citizens of Middelburg to desist from persecuting the Anabaptists and to permit them to go their ways and trade, in spite of their refusal to serve in the army. For Sully would have no fourth sect in Europe at all. But Henry, who considered that "Paris was worth a mass," was no religious stickler. If Russia (or, rather, Muscovy) refused to enter the association, she was to be stripped of her European dominions and confined to Asia. The Pope was to become a temporal prince and be constituted the mediator between the Powers. Politically, Henry's design had been called a mere Alliance against the House of Habsburg. This was to confuse its means with its end. That end was, in Sully's own words, "to save the European Powers from the maintenance of so many thousand soldiers, so many fortified places, and so many military expenses; to free them for ever from the fear of those bloody catastrophes so common in Europe; to procure them an uninterrupted repose; and, finally, to unite them all in an indissoluble bond of security and friendship, after which they might live together like brethren." For "peace," wrote Sully, "is the great and common interest of Europe. . . . What is the consequence of that profound policy of which she is so vain, other than her own continual laceration and ruin? . . . Why must we always impose on ourselves the necessity of passing through war to arrive at peace, the attainment of which is the end of all wars and a plain proof that recourse is had to war only for want of a better expedient?" "Nevertheless, we have so effectually confounded this truth that we seem to make peace only that we may again be able to make war."

* * *

SPAIN then, upon the principle of self-determination, was to be divested of all her dominions in Europe except Spain. Her extra-European possessions she was to keep, with the condition that commerce with them was to be "free and open to every one." Since Charles V. and Philip II. did undoubtedly aim at universal monarchy, it was not unreasonable that Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands should be henceforward free of the military and clerical attentions of the Spaniards. But Sully expressly declares that Spain was to be a member of the confederacy, and that only upon her refusal of all negotiations was force to be used against her. Henry himself was "voluntarily and for ever to relinquish all power of augmenting his dominions, not only by conquest, but by all other just and lawful means." Switzerland by the addition of Franche Comté, Alsace, and Tyrol, was to become a sovereign Republic; the seventeen provinces of the Low Countries to be united in the "Belgic Republic"; Italy to be a kind of Ducal federation, and so on.

* * *

To maintain harmony between the Powers, to bind them to their reciprocal oaths and engagements, and so on, a general council on the Amphictyonic model was to be founded, "representing all the States of Europe," who would send their plenipotentiaries to it, would pool their military resources under its command, and would fix a city in Mid-Europe for its permanent sitting. Anybody can build sand-castles, but the point is that the "great design" was conceived by a Renaissance king, and that Henry was actually setting forth from Paris to put it into commission and himself at the head of the allied forces when Spain got him at last. The flaws of the scheme are irrelevant, and, if nobody else was, Henry himself was certainly disinterested. His large and genial soul, for the time being, absorbed the needs of Humanity, and from that point of view exclusively history will always repeat itself.

H. J. M.

Reviews.

RIVERS OF LIFE.

"Human Geography of Western Europe: A Study in Appreciation." By H. J. FLEURE, Professor in the University College of Aberystwith. (Williams & Norgate. 5s. net.)

THE human problems of Western Europe have to-day sprung into new life. Few of us have felt any passionate interest in the course of man's history, and most had no clear idea of the special significance of Europe even in the present. The immense upheaval we witness to-day has suggested to them that they have been asleep. They dimly begin to feel that they inhabit one of the storm centres of the world, for thousands of years the perpetual stage of evolutions and revolutions, of expansions and catastrophes, of declinations and ascensions. It is the moment when the men of science whose lives have been spent in deciphering the ancient records of these movements are called upon to throw what illumination they can upon the problems, new and yet old, of Western Europe.

Professor Fleure is one of the men of science among us best equipped to respond to this invitation, which has come to him through Professor Patrick Geddes and Mr. Victor Branford, editors of "The Making of the Future" series. His brilliant and elaborate studies of the populations of Western Europe, especially the lengthy investigation of the nature and distribution of Welsh types published in the "Journal of the Anthropological Institute," two years ago, are well known to all interested in such matters. Receptively in touch with the most up-to-date researches of others, he has displayed fine skill in analysing and grouping human types, in showing their relationship to the ancient populations of our islands, and in indicating the probable lines of their migration and the varying reasons for their distribution and development. It may be said, indeed, that he was predestined to success in such investigations. A native of the Channel Islands, and, as his name seems to indicate, of the ancient Anglicised Norman people long settled there, he studied in various parts of Europe, especially in Germany and Switzerland, reaching the study of Man, as have some other notable anthropologists, by the great natural highroad of Zoology. It is clear that Professor Fleure is singularly well prepared by birth and training, as well as by his later studies of the complex problems presented by Wales, to deal adequately with the great subject he has here undertaken; even the special fascination which the migrational paths of peoples and cultures possess for him may be said to be predetermined; and this equipment is accompanied by those personal qualities without which all equipment is useless. We are throughout conscious in his writings of a high degree of intelligence, sensitive and versatile, of a sane balance, of a fine power of sympathetic appreciation, even rarer.

There are various angles at which the spiritual life of a people or group of peoples may be studied. Buckle, sixty years ago, enumerated these as Climate, Food, Soil, and the General Aspect of Nature in its psychic influence, dismissing superciliously in a footnote the element of Heredity, which nowadays, in its social as well as racial aspects, seems to many the most important of all. Climate, which Buckle placed first, has found diligent exponents of late, especially since its probable changes in even recent times have come to be recognized, and in this connection the name of Ellsworth Huntington may be mentioned. Professor Fleure selects Soil, and is primarily concerned to view European peoples from the geographical angle, but not exclusively, nor can he fail to take into account climate, since climate and soil mutually interact on each other, though we should not accept the common confusion of meteorology with geography. To study a population from a special angle is arbitrary and incomplete, but it is an entirely legitimate and scientific method. It clarifies and unifies vision, rendering possible a coherent picture in a small space. The geographical angle lends itself, it is true, to the solemn enunciation of vague formulas which are rather futile; Professor Fleure, always quick in perception, apologizes for such formulations as

"trite but useful," and elsewhere admits that these external physical circumstances by no means serve completely to determine human fate and character. It is, indeed, because he takes the geographical angle lightly, and sees—even asserts—the importance of the others, that his exposition is so helpful.

It is no disparagement to an admirable little book to have to say that it fails in some respect to fulfil the high expectations which its author's qualities and equipment raise. For this the author may doubtless throw much of the responsibility on the editors, the publishers, and the difficult conditions of the time. The task of compressing a study of all the peoples of the West, great and little, even when considered mainly under a single aspect, within two hundred and fifty small pages, involves a sketchy and sometimes bald treatment; this condensed method might have been supported by footnotes on matters of detail, but there is only a single footnote in the whole volume, though that (on the historical importance of salt) is so instructive that the reader would have been thankful for many such notes. The diagrammatic maps, also, are few, rough, and unsatisfactory. A still more serious defect is the complete absence of precise references; the value of such a book as this for all serious readers is largely that it serves as an introduction to what for most is a new subject; it attracts attention to an important field and serves as a sign-post to the roads that lead there. In other words, the reader needs at the end of the volume, or of each chapter, a brief critical bibliography, of which we here find no trace beyond a few vague references in the Preface. This defect, which would have cost so little to repair, is, frankly speaking, inexcusable, and when left to himself, Professor Fleure, as his other writings show, is guilty of no such negligence. Let us hope that (as the Preface seems to hint) this little book is a foretaste of a larger and more comprehensive work in which the author's great gifts and fine equipment will have free scope.

It would be ungracious to insist on the defects of a book which is so illuminative and at the present time so helpful. Professor Fleure calls it in the sub-title "A Study in Appreciation." Rightly understood, it is perhaps needless to remark, "appreciation" is not indiscriminate eulogy but critical valuation in which the emphasis is on the sympathetic side. At the present time we tend to arrange the peoples of Europe into two groups, according as they are fighting or likely to fight on our side, and fighting or likely to fight on the opposing side, the one group being all white and the other group all black; which side we are fighting on makes no difference, as the colors can be reversed at will. Now Professor Fleure is aware of the Great War, and alludes to it profitably more than once. But he is also aware that the characteristics of nations are not dependent on the shifting chances of local opinion, but are determined by factors rooted in the far past. Against the caprices of opinion, to which he never alludes, he sets forth his "appreciation" of the parts played in the world by the different peoples of Western Europe, parts necessarily determined for them by the circumstances of the world acting on their own hereditary traits. Herein—if a reviewer may be permitted to say so whose own estimates happen in every case to coincide—the author reveals a fine discrimination and a soundly balanced judgment. France comes first, because, by her geographical position and psychic characteristics, she is the "Way of Light age after age," with "a position of natural leadership in the spiritual life of Western Europe." The Iberian Peninsula, perhaps to the surprise of those who take a narrow and temporary view of European culture, comes next, transcending in achievements, as Professor Fleure acknowledges, merely physical circumstances, the first of European lands to expand in the modern world and with a yet unexhausted reservoir of energy, so that, as the author, following others, remarks, even the backwardness of Spain in the present age of centralization and industrialism may be an advantage to that country and the world in the next stage of evolution. Italy comes next, and here we may note as characteristic the author's carefully balanced attitude towards Italian Imperialism, as "ambitions perhaps justifiable, perhaps dangerous, but at least easily understandable in a period that has been obsessed by aggressive expansionism"; but he thinks that circumstances, geographical and industrial, under the conditions of the immediate future will give increased importance to Italy, who may influentially

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help to inaugurate a new era of co-operation, and we "must hope that her thinkers may guide her away from the allurements of expansionism." Germany occupies geographically a peculiar and exposed "corridor position" in Europe, and this fact, with its tendency to favor migratory movements, the everlasting difficulty in drawing a definite frontier line, and the inevitable militarism, makes it necessary for the author to give a vague title to the entirely fair and dispassionate chapter mainly devoted to Germany. He points out that the Elbe is really the great German river, and seeks to explain how it has come about that Leipzig and Magdeburg, either of which might have been the great Germanic capital, with immense benefit to the world and to Germany herself, have unfortunately had to yield the first place to Berlin; he further remarks on the fact that much that is rightly applauded and respected in Germany has really been elaborated by the comparatively free small nations on her borders. Bohemia, Switzerland, Holland, Flanders, Wallony, and Luxembourg are briefly considered in well-packed sections. A separate section is also given to Alsace and Lorraine. As we know, half a century ago the most conspicuous representatives of English opinion, men such as Carlyle and Kingsley, were jubilant at the prospect of the return of these provinces to Germany; to-day their successors look forward with equal joy to the reversion of the same provinces to France. If these hopes are fulfilled, another shifting of British judgment will be due half a century hence.

Professor Fleure makes no reference, however, to the weathercock of public opinion; he is concerned only with fundamental facts, and the essential fact here is that these "woefully placed" provinces, while more closely linked with the Latin than the Germanic civilization, yet occupy a genuinely intermediate position, tolerant partakers of both civilizations, with the special function, which in earlier centuries they exercised beneficially, of mediating between France and Germany, and especially of adapting the waves of civilization from the French side to the needs and aptitudes of the German side. It is impossible to read the history of German literature without perpetually coming on to Strassburg as the great centre of diffusion of spiritual life. The chapter devoted to Britain is placed last, and here Professor Fleure is reticent in characterization; but he lucidly sets forth the factors which influenced the development of this group of islands off the French coast, at the extreme western corner of Europe, the last goal of ancient pathways from the North and from the Mediterranean and from the Great European Plain, and he points out how conditions which once made Britain backward, and later placed her at the centre, now make it necessary for her to combine with Eastern neighbors and to pay more attention than before to international co-operation. It need scarcely be added that the author views favorably a League of Nations, though he points out that it is not always clear what a "nation" should be, and that the most favorably constituted nations are not those in which a single racial element prevails (he considers that Switzerland has, perhaps, suffered from this cause), but those in which the elements are mixed, and so apt for a many-sided activity in the world.

In the immediate past, nationalism has been the prevailing ideal, with what results we know. There is still a place for nationalism, even for that of the small nations. But in so far as nationalism means the rule of suspicion and hatred, of mutual antagonism, of perpetual aggression, it has ceased either to fulfil our needs or to correspond to our knowledge. Europe, we are beginning to learn, is a complex living organism, made of the same stuff throughout and on the same plan, yet everywhere with subtle differences in the composition. It has thus come about that each national group acts as an organ with its own special functions, itself dependent on the whole and yet imparting valuable elements on which that whole is dependent. What happens when that great central fact of the European situation fails to be recognized we see to-day. The health and sanity of Europe can only be reached by that road of intelligent and large-hearted "appreciation" along which Professor Fleure offers to guide us. There are few who by reading and meditating this little book will fail to become better qualified to fulfil their duties as "good Europeans."

HAVELOCK ELLIS.

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION.

"The Last of the Romanofs." By CHARLES RIVET. Translated by HARDRESS O'GRADY. (Constable. 7s. 6d. net.)

"Russia's Agony." By ROBERT WILTON. (Arnold. 15s. net.)

WE have here two books by newspaper correspondents, both well acquainted with their subject. M. Rivet was correspondent for the "Temps" from 1901 onwards; Mr. Wilton is the well-known correspondent of the "Times," and he tells us that Russia has been his home for half-a-century. Both, therefore, speak with unusual authority, and bring the minds of trained writers to their task. The theme of the two books is almost exactly the same. It is the origin and course of the Russian Revolution, and in both the same movements, parties, and personalities are discussed; the same documents are often given. We may assume that both writers intend to be perfectly fair and unprejudiced; Mr. Wilton tells us in his Preface that he claims no merit for his book other than sincerity and freedom from race or party bias. The difference between the two lies in their temperaments, and to study their accounts of the same events would be a useful lesson in the difficulty of obtaining historical truth.

One of M. Rivet's claims to distinction was his early discovery of Russia's weakness. For many years he had known that in trusting to the Russian Alliance France was relying upon a support which would break in time of need. He attempted to point out the danger to his countrymen, but his letters were refused publication in France, and only in Switzerland could his warnings find utterance. One would have thought that anybody acquainted with Russia might have perceived the helplessness of the old régime. To the want of "character," which M. Rivet especially notices in the Russian nature, the Tsar's Government added a general incapacity for detail, an almost complete lack of organization, and a wide corruption, of which everyone became aware so soon as he was unhappy enough to have dealings with the bureaucrats. All these sources of weakness—these sure evidences of coming collapse—have now been revealed to the world. Yet for half-a-century our foreign policy was guided or hampered mainly by terror of Russia's imaginary power. Even her defeat by Japan did not deter us from seeking her imaginary assistance as an Ally, and at the beginning of the present war, imaginative writers still extolled the irresistible might of that "steam-roller." In France the illusion was more powerful and more disastrous. As M. Rivet writes, all protest against it was in vain:—

"It was impossible to swim against the current, when French newspapers at every possible opportunity wrote fatuously that the 'innumerable mujik,' 'the gigantic forest of Russian bayonets,' constituted the greatest force in Europe! How they harped on that belief! How every ignoramus boasted of that prodigious Russia!

"The power of Russia was neither more nor less than a hypnosis and even sheer bluff. The French Press invented it and exaggerated it to such an extent that the Russians themselves became bashful."

We may imagine with what feelings this patriotic Frenchman saw his countrymen confiding in this enfeebled and incapable monster, pouring their hard-won savings into its hopeless financial chaos, and looking for victory to that ill-organized and corrupt administration. Yet it was in vain for him to reveal the truth. His words were not listened to; they were not even permitted to be heard. He shared the common fate of all who expose the Idols of the Marketplace—the cherished illusions of that pitiable creature, "the Man-in-the-street."

Had it been possible for M. Rivet even five years ago to have described the Tsar's Government as he describes it here, we might have been living in a happier world. No one could have believed in the power or honor of an autocracy putrefying under the foul influence of Rasputin and his adorers at Court. Any who may still believe in the divine right or the divine wisdom of kings, queens, and princes should read his hideous story of corruption and imbecility for themselves. Let all worshippers of the State also read the account of the "Tchinovniks"—the bureaucrats or officials—who were the curse of Russia, as they will always be the curse of every country in which the State is worshipped, since the bureaucrat can say, even more truly than the despot, "The State? I am the State." As partners in

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the bureaucracy, alike the servants and masters of the rest, stood the Secret Police—the "okhrana"—working perpetually underground, striking down all the noblest spirits of the country, and employing those foul "provocative agents" which our own increasing bureaucracy has now begun to employ:—

"Just as Rasputin sinned in order to be able to repent, so the okhrana caused the highest personages in Russia to be murdered in order to prove to the survivors how necessary was its own existence."

The whole of the book is one of the calmest but most damning indictments we have read against the system of Tsardom and all its agents and methods. It is at the same time a sufficient justification of the Revolution, no matter how disappointing the results for our Alliance up to now. In his conclusion, M. Rivet writes:—

"Prejudices and trickery fall with the fallen Tsar. Free Russia, the Czech Professor Massaryk has said, is a terrible blow at Prussianism. The Russians have won a formidable victory for us. One must not deny that, because of the excesses of a few extremists. Let us not revile the Russian Revolution; that would add to the wrongs we have already done to Russia."

"It would be a crime against humanity," he continues, "not to rejoice greatly at what has happened." From the Allies' point of view, how vital also was M. Rivet's discovery in November, 1916, that the thing which the Court, the Tsarina, the Prime Minister Stürmer, the holy scoundrel Rasputin, the officials and the whole Tsardom in general feared most in all the world was victory!—

"They are afraid," he wrote in that critical month; "they are afraid of a too complete victory which would sweep away to its last atom in Europe, striking a parous blow at the principle of absolute monarchy by suppressing the secret ally of revolutionary Russia, William, German Emperor. . . . The fear of victory in these offices sweats from the very walls."

The fear was baseless. If Russia had ever been capable of victory, she had become utterly incapable by November, 1916. Those who feared victory had rendered her incapable of it. But how greatly benefited the Allies would have been had they heard this warning! We were not allowed to hear it. Excluded from Paris, it appeared only in a Geneva paper, which few outside Switzerland could see.

Mr. Wilton's book is larger, and his narration of events makes it at least equally valuable, though his habit of harking back to earlier history is rather confusing. But the value of his conclusions is more difficult to estimate. He professes himself free from party bias, yet on the very next page of the Introduction he denounces "Socialism" as the road to certain "Anarchy." Throughout the book, he appears to dread "the taint of Socialism" more than anything else, and to be writing as a pamphleteer against every Socialistic hope or measure. His detestation of Socialism leads him to extol Stolypin, especially for his destruction of the ancient Russian system of the village commune or "Mir," and for his attempt to create a private property in land for the peasants, whom he hoped thus to convert into conservative supporters of things as they are. The same motive prompts him to denounce Kerensky as "a madman," to reserve all his praise for Korniloff, Kaledin, and other leaders of the attempted counter-revolution, and to describe Lenin and his followers as German agents, purchased by German gold. For the same reason, he agrees with Mrs. Pankhurst in regarding the Cossacks as the surest agents for restoring "law and order"—a very dubious expectation. We must, of course, make allowances. It is difficult for a man who has spent most of his life under the tyranny of Tsars and bureaucrats to sympathize with such an upheaval as the Revolution, inevitably implying so much discomfort, confusion, and violent change of habit and thought. Almost everyone, except the wretched, is conservative in the way of personal life, and natural conservatism is likely to be emphasized in a correspondent of the "Times." One can only say that this bias against "Socialism" may disable a writer from realizing the significance of the movement, and from appreciating the genuine motives of its leaders—especially of the "absolutist" leaders who at present direct it.

Less serious, but still to be reckoned with, is the natural tendency of a correspondent to exaggerate the merits of influential people who have assisted or befriended him. It comes of amiable gratitude or transparent vanity, but none the less is likely to pervert historic judgment, and when

Mr. Wilton repeatedly speaks of his intimate conversations with this or that royal personage, minister, or general our suspicions are aroused. To these two failings we may perhaps trace the peculiar contradiction running through a book in many ways so informing. Even M. Rivet exposes the weakness, cruelty, and degradation of the old Tsardom hardly more clearly than Mr. Wilton. Mr. Wilton shows that the Court was thoroughly Pro-German in 1916. He tells how Protopopoff, who then with Rasputin dominated the Court, went to Stockholm to arrange a separate peace:—

"Germany," he tells us, just as M. Rivet says, "was regarded by the bureaucracy and the okhrana as the refuge of absolutism, and, therefore, as the natural friend and ally of Russia."

Yet the conclusion is that he "could not wish anything better for Russia than the establishment of a Constitutional Monarchy." "The ideal occupant of the new throne," he tells us, "would be Alexis Nikolaievich." Alexis, the ex-Tsar's son, has been brought up as a spoilt child amid the adulation of a Byzantine Court, under the tutelage of a father and mother whose one guiding motive was to hand on to him the autocratic power without diminution. What kind of Constitution should we expect from such a youth? We remember the manner in which the Tsar kept his pledge to Witte's Constitution of 1905-1906. We remember the hangings, the imprisonments, the exiles, the violent suppression of every Liberal tendency during the following years of hideous reaction. From the restoration of the Tsardom in any form we can but expect a repetition of that atrocious tyranny.

MR. MONKHOUSE'S TRAGI-COMEDY.

"Men and Ghosts." By ALLAN MONKHOUSE. (Collins. 6s. net.)

THOSE who have read Mr. Monkhouse at his best—and to those who have not yet done so we recommend "The Education of Mr. Surrag"—will turn eagerly to his new novel "Men and Ghosts." Extraordinarily sure in artistic handling and poise, extraordinarily keen in its play of ironical and spiritual integrity in this little masterpiece. One searches for something with which to compare it, but "Men and Ghosts" is unique in atmosphere. One perceives, here and there, traces of the influence of Meredith and Browning, but the total effect is of a new master of the weapon of disconcerting irony, a weapon that deals imperturbably with both the flesh and the spirit. Typically English, too, is "Men and Ghosts." A foreign critic would note its acute self-consciousness, a certain jerkiness in its spiritual articulations, so to speak, and that hesitating debate between flesh and spirit which is the legacy of pagan forbears. Of course, the subject—the struggle between two men, one of pagan, the other of an agnostic nature, to win the love of the beautiful Rose Avory, whose exalted vision of the Christian ideal forms a barrier between herself and love, accentuates the insular note. Mr. Monkhouse, however, contrasts the character of the agnostic Fenn whose "sceptical, inflexible self is not to be cheated, not to be suppressed, submerged, but certain to revolt from any sentimental compromise" with the pagan-natured Bill Campion, a sensuous, genial, generous-hearted creature. And Bill, in his splendid vitality of unabashed earthy roguishness is a fine creation. Put Burns, minus his Scotch genius and upbringing in the body of a modern Englishman, and you have Bill. Rose Avory, seen through the eyes of the men, is suggestively sketched rather than substantiated, with her core of Christian devotion.

From the start, Mr. Monkhouse's ironic veracity comes into play. Bill has seduced a village girl, Jessie, who is to be a mother, and the situation leads to Bill's confession to Fenn, both his friend and rival, and to Rose Avory, with the result that the saint is drawn hesitatingly closer to the sinner! The contrast in Rose's heart, between the woman and the Christian, is subtly indicated. Bill should marry Jessie, but how if this Christian solution should decline a union on a low level? There is comedy in the whole situation. And Bill, with his plasticity and plausible talk about reparation and the power of ideals, holds the stage. He is really finely roguish in his free-hearted poses, and the centre of the drama is subtly thrust on us when Rose confesses: "Oh! I'm tempted just to think of Christ when I should think of you

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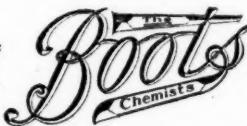
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and Jessie Bland." People, of course, may question the probability of the scene, but everything is possible with Bill as protagonist, and when, later on, rock-climbing with a party at Wasdale Head, he falls from a ledge and is picked up a bodily wreck, we feel, too, this is just another example of Bill's trick of disconcerting everybody. Mr. Monkhouse now unfolds, with sardonic jest and spiritual lucidity, half-a-dozen unforgettable scenes of tragi-comedy. Bill is dying slowly of a damaged spine; it's his show now with Rose, and she must give him what she can; and slowly but surely her earthly lover, Fenn, finds himself dispossessed, barred out, while "she glowed and thrilled mysteriously as she looked at the wasting, suffering figure on the bed." Bill becomes to her the symbol of Christ in his suffering and death—and the point is that she is blotting out the living in her mystical emotion, she is sacrificing the life to be to the cult of the figure on the Cross. Of course, Mr. Monkhouse illumines his theme with shades of cross-lighting, now tender and glowing, now chill and austere, now shot with flashes of Bill's expiring humor. For Bill, too, in his final rôle of supplanter, sees the "stupendous joke that he should aspire to be Rose's spiritual mate." And the tragi-comedy is relieved by various minor developments in which the author's sardonic humor puts the world at even greater disadvantage than the flesh and the spirit. There is the scene, for example, of Bill's death-bed marriage to poor Jessie Harper, with its undertone of ghastly decorum and feminine jealousy. There is, again, the desperate effort of Bill's worldly parents, the polite, conventional Mr. and Mrs. Campion, to prevent Bill bequeathing them their legacy of "social embarrassment." Thus every scene, nearly every page, has its sharp arrow piercing to the mark of human bitterness, of the comic struggle of the spirit with its clayey vesture. And we have only glanced here at the more obvious implications.

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The Week in the City.

THE BUDGET.

WEALTHY City men were rather relieved than otherwise by Monday's Budget. There had been some fear of a still stiffer income-tax and of increased death duties. But the position of the direct taxpayer has been relieved by the imposition of heavy indirect taxation upon consumers, under the heading of beer, spirits, and tobacco. The doubling of the stamp on cheques is disliked, but it is hoped that the Chancellor of the Exchequer may abandon this proposal as it has been abandoned before. So far the effect of the new taxation upon securities has been very slight. But it is hardly possible that breweries and distilleries will maintain their present price levels, which are due to the enormous opening for profits given to the trades by the present Government's policy.

As a consequence of the increase on income-tax from 5s. to 6s., the Government has withdrawn its offer of 4 per cent. tax-free Bonds at 100, and the price is now 101. On Wednesday, Spanish Fours bounded up again to 126 as a result of movements in the exchange. Dutch Bonds are lower, in consequence of the supposed friction between Holland and Germany. The supplies of money have been abundant, and short loans have ranged from 2 to 3 per cent., with a three months' discount rate at about $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. One satisfactory feature of the Budget, it should be added, is the arrangement with America by which the United States, apparently, will in future finance the Allies, leaving us to finance ourselves. Mr. Bonar Law's statement was extremely lucid, and all who heard it were impressed with his mastery of figures. But Mr. Arnold showed on Tuesday that the official view of post-war expenditure is probably much too optimistic and that, if the war lasts another year, we can hardly expect the normal rate of income-tax to be less than 7s. 6d. in the pound. If that were the average, the millionaires will be lucky if they escape with a rate of 15s. Even under the present Budget our richest men will have to pay more than half their incomes in income-tax and super-tax. On the first £2,500 they have to pay 6s. in the pound, and on the remainder 10s. 6d. in the pound, as the super-tax has been raised to 4s. 6d.

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CURRENCY NOTES IN CIRCULATION.

	£
End of 1914	38,478,000
End of 1915	103,125,000
End of 1916	150,144,000
End of 1917	212,782,000
April 17th, 1918	233,080,000

During the same period the ratio of the reserve of coin and bullion against the issue has fallen from 48 per cent. to 12·2 per cent., and any diminution in the number of cheques used will be bound to have the effect of adding to the already disquieting total of Treasury Notes. The revenue which it is estimated will be derived from the additional penny, though easy of collection, is too small to justify the further inflation of the currency which it would entail.

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